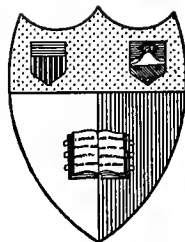


FAIRY TALES FROM
THE HARZ MOUNTAINS

ALFRED C. FRYER

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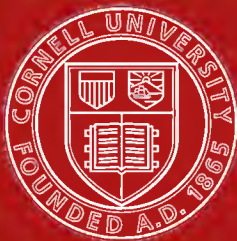
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FAIRY TALES FROM THE HARZ MOUNTAINS

FAIRY TALES FROM THE HARZ MOUNTAINS

BY

ALFRED C. FRYER

Author of "The Book of English Fairy Tales," "Travels in Dreamland," "Vic"

ILLUSTRATED BY

ALICE M. ODGERS

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JT

TO
MY GODSON BERNHARD
AND ALL
OTHER GOOD LITTLE MEN
THIS BOOK OF
FAIRY TALES IS INSCRIBED

P R E F A C E

IN that beautiful romantic land of hill and forest, of narrow gorges and rushing streams known as the Harz Mountains, are located a series of charming fairy tales which are collected together in this volume. Nearly all these stories have their homes on the slopes of one or other of the mountains or in the wooded valleys beside the roaring streams; and as valuable minerals are mined in some parts of this district we, therefore, find some of the stories refer to mines and miners. One of the mountain torrents is known by the name of the giant Bodo; and thousands of pilgrims yearly ascend the high cliff overlooking this valley, now called the "Rosztrappe" to see the impress of a horse's hoof in the rock, which tradition tells us was planted there by Brunhilda's snow-white steed when it carried her safely over the mighty chasm.

Not far from Thale are the Seven Springs which originated from the tears shed by the seven lovely

PREFACE

sisters for their princely lovers ; and the old grey walls and towers of Falkenstein are still inhabited and is one of the most picturesque of ancient castles.

The Ilsenstein still rears its rocky summit above the valley where King Ilsung's ill-fated palace stood, and through which flows the stream still known by the name of the beautiful Princess Ilse.

The hamlet of Treseburg, the ruins of Regenstein, the wooded heights of Ramelsberg, the castle of Blankenburg, and the old city of Goslar where the town councillor lived who tried to gain the secret from the miner's wife of Klausthal, are still visited by countless travellers.

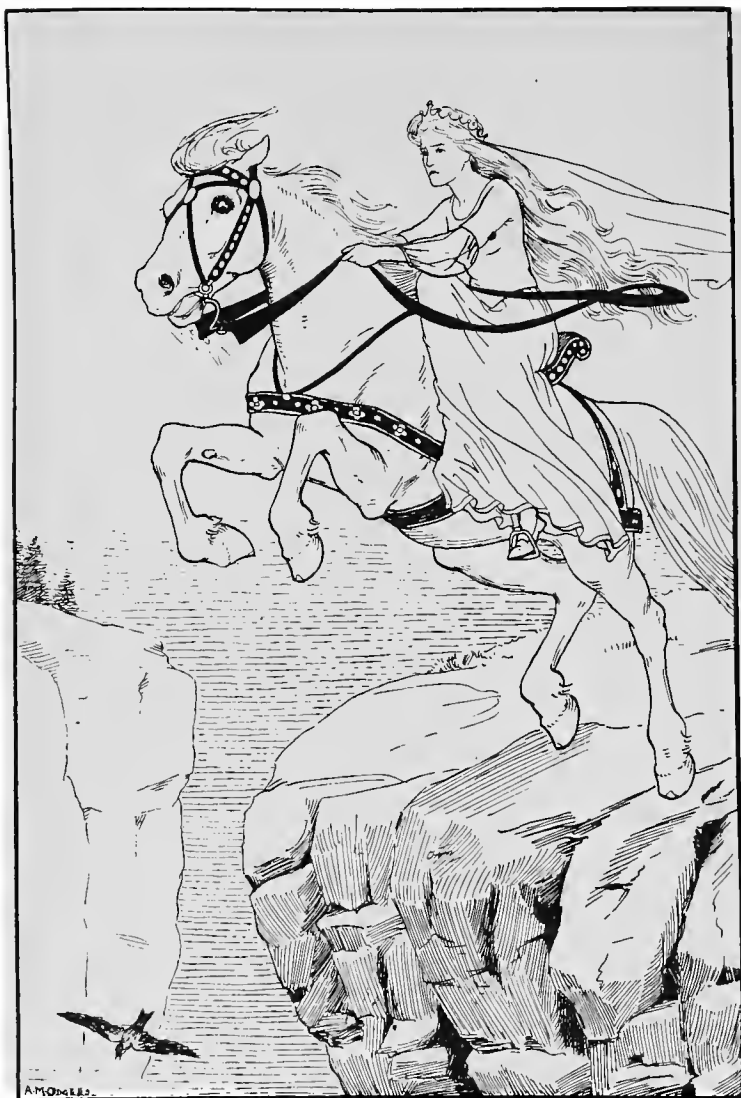
The great German poet Goethe has made the lonely Brocken famous in his wonderful poem of "Faust", and the children of the Harz Mountains still hide their heads under their pillows on the fateful Eve of Saint Walpurgis.

Clifton-Bristol.

INDEX

	Page
BRUNHILDA	11
BRUNHILDA'S GOLDEN CROWN	25
THE SEVEN SPRINGS	41
THE THREE WOOD-NYMPHS	47
THE THREE GOBLETS	57
THE PROUD PRINCESS	65
THE GOLDEN NINEPIN	75
THE ENCHANTED FLOWER	81
THE TRANSPORTED CASTLE	91
THE WHITE STAG	99
THE ELVES AND THE FLOWERS	113
THE EVERLASTING LAMP AND THE MAGIC SPINDLE	121
THE THREE GREY MANNIKINS	129
THE INSECT MESSENGER	139
THE KING OF THE MANNIKINS	149
PRINCESS ILSE	159
PRINCESS ILSE AND THE CHARCOAL-BURNER	165
THE THREE MAGIC WISHES	171
ST. WALPURGIS EVE	185
THE DEVIL'S MILL	193
TIDIAN'S CAVE	201

BRUNHILDA



Brunhilda

BRUNHILDA

The fair Brunhilda was the daughter of the old King of Bohemia, and many a handsome prince and gallant knight came from distant lands to try and win the lovely maiden.

One dewy morning a noble youth rode up to the Palace of the white-haired King of Bohemia. He was the only son of the King of the Harz whose strong castle was built on a mighty crag overhanging a deep ravine.

No sooner had the young man beheld the lovely princess than he knew that his heart was no longer his own, and his one desire was to win the love of the royal maiden. When Brunhilda saw the prince, with his bright blue eyes, his flaxen hair, and manly bearing, her heart beat quick and fast, and a blush overspread her face like a sunset glow on the mountains

FAIRY TALES FROM THE HARZ MOUNTAINS

of Bohemia. Then she knew full well that she had seen the one man she loved above all others. Thus these two young hearts were drawn together, they plighted their troth, and vowed that nothing but death should separate them.

With a light heart the young prince rode gaily away to the far away Harz to tell his father the joy that was his and to prepare the old castle for Brunhilda's home-coming. He promised to return after two moons had come and gone and carry back the princess as his bride and his queen.

Brunhilda could not hide her tears at the parting. A sad foreboding filled her mind with gloomy thoughts, and oppressed her soul with some coming calamity.

In the north of Europe there lived a race of great giants. They were so strong and so powerful that at the very mention of their name men trembled and fear came into all hearts. The fame of Brunhilda's loveliness had spread even into this land of the giants. One of the strongest and most powerful princes among these mighty men was the giant Bodo, and he determined to win the princess and carry her away as his bride. With a gay and handsome retinue he travelled to Bohemia; and he brought with him gold and amber and precious stones in the hope that the sight of these

BRUNHILDA

costly gifts would gladden the heart of the princess. Gold, however, is no measure of true love, and amber and precious stones cannot win the heart of one that is plighted to another.

The old King of Bohemia received Bodo with becoming honour for he was a great and mighty monarch. A splendid banquet was prepared for him and when he beheld the grace and beauty of the fair princess he determined to win her at all costs. With strong and powerful words he demanded that the old King should give him his daughter in marriage and with a loud voice he declared that he would not receive "nay" for an answer.

The old King knew well that Bodo would make him a powerful son-in-law, and he was blinded by the great strength of the giant, the splendour of his retinue, and the costly gifts he had brought from distant lands. He thought that the alliance with so great a prince would enhance his daughter's happiness as well as strengthen the Kingdom of Bohemia. His old withered heart forgot that true love cannot be changed like a garment and nothing can separate hearts that are faithful.

The old King implored Brunhilda to give up all thought of a marriage with the young prince from the

FAIRY TALES FROM THE HARZ MOUNTAINS

Harz and to accept the all-powerful Bodo as her successful wooer. Brunhilda flung herself down at her father's feet; but neither her tears, her sighs, nor her prayers could move the obdurate old man. However, he had an interview with the giant and he told him that after the custom of his country he should receive his answer in three days.

The old King knew that if he denied Bodo the wish of his heart his rage and his anger would burst forth like a volcano and the giant would destroy his palace and make his country into a desert land. So he turned a deaf ear to Brunhilda's weeping and told her to prepare for her wedding.

No sooner had the old King informed Bodo that the wedding-day was fixed than a sudden change came over Brunhilda. She wept no more tears, she sighed no more sighs and she let no one see how deeply she abhorred the giant for she met him with a sweet and stately dignity. One thing she determined upon and that was she would sooner die than become Bodo's bride. She still hoped for deliverance and believed that the young prince from the Harz would claim her before the fatal day, and in knightly combat free her from becoming Bodo's bride.

In the golden light of each day's dawning she ascended

BRUNHILDA

the watch-tower, but alas! the young prince came not. Each noon she shaded her eyes from the blazing sun, but she saw no help coming near, and when the shadows lengthened she again climbed the tower and looked away to the blue Harz mountains, but she saw no rider speeding towards her. "Flight" she said to herself "is now my only means of escape, and I must fly to the home of my prince." As the thought passed through her mind she looked down from the tower and in the meadow below the castle she beheld two of Bodo's giant horses. One was dark as the night, the other was light as the dawn. One was the war-horse of Bodo and the other he intended should carry his bride to the land of the giants. Flight on such a horse was possible and courage again filled the heart of Brunhilda.

She begged Bodo to teach her to ride the beautiful horse, and each day she mounted her snow white steed, whose eyes shone like stars and whose feet and limbs were full of grace and power. The giant was delighted to show the fair rider how best to curb her fiery steed or to urge it forward to greater exertion. They rode together through forest glades, they crossed the broad plains at a canter, they climbed the steep hills, and now and again they had a friendly race.



The giant Bodo pursuing Brunhilda

BRUNHILDA

At last the eve of the wedding day came. Many guests arrived but the son of the king of the Harz came not. Music and laughter echoed through the halls of the old King's palace. No wedding guest laughed louder than the bridegroom, and no maiden in that gay throng seemed brighter or more gay than the fair young bride. She smiled on Bodo, she stroked his beard, she jested with her friends. All eyes followed the lovely damsel. Her white robes floated around her, the diamonds which Bodo had given her glittered on her bosom, while her golden crown rested on her flaxen ringlets.

At last Brunhilda begged permission to retire to her chamber to prepare for the festivity of the morrow.

Instead of entering her bower Brunhilda descended the stairs, crossed the courtyard, and went direct to the stable. Here she found her snow-white steed. She at once mounted the noble creature, ordered the drawbridge to be lowered and galloped forth towards the southern mountains—the home of her true love.

Neither song, nor music, nor laughter prevented Bodo from hearing the neighing of the white horse and the lowering of the drawbridge. He fled from the revelers and his hurried steps echoed through the silent corridors. When he reached the courtyard he

FAIRY TALES FROM THE HARZ MOUNTAINS

saw the white horse cross the drawbridge, Brunhilda's flaxen locks waving in the night breeze and her golden crown glittering in the moonlight.

Bodo uttered one wild furious cry of uncontrollable passion, and the very walls of the castle trembled at the terrible rage of the infuriated giant. In haste he harnessed his black charger, vaulted into the saddle, and like the wild wind from the north he galloped over the drawbridge, away, after the flying princess.

The snow white steed and the fair princess flew on through valley and dale, over crag and fell, through darksome forest and through many a roaring torrent. The great black charger and his furious rider quickly followed. He seemed like the shadow of night speeding after the brightness of day. The earth trembled beneath the heavy hoofs of the mighty horse. The birds of the forest hid beneath the leaves of the trees, and even the wild animals fled away terrified as Bodo rode past in the darkness.

Forwards, ever forwards, fled Brunhilda like a hunted deer, while Bodo followed with wild cries of rage like a storm from the desert.

All night long Brunhilda was chased by Bodo. When morning broke and bathed the mountain and forest in a flood of golden light the princess was still pursued

BRUNHILDA

by the savage giant. Her golden crown shone in the sunlight, her white veil waved behind her, and her flaxen ringlets danced in the breeze, Bodo was bareheaded, his fist was clenched in anger, and his wild shouts caused the birds to fly back in terror to their nests in the forest.

As the morning mists rolled away Brunhilda beheld the Harz Mountains. At first they looked like some cloud in the distance, but soon they became clear and distinct. "Yonder is the home of my true love," cried the princess joyously, "yonder is safety for me," and she urged her horse forward.

It was a fair fresh morning and dew and gossamer lay heavy on the bushes. She passed through forests of beech and pine, where the trees shut out the light and few birds sang. Bodo came nearer, and each time she looked behind she saw the dreaded pursuer. Anxiously she urged her steed onwards, and soon the shouts of the wild bridegroom became less distinct as the distance widened between them. She passed through many a sunny dale and winding valley. Still the giant pursued her. She climbed the outlying spurs of the great Harz Mountains.

Upwards ever upwards sped the white horse with the fair princess. Ever higher to where the dark pines

FAIRY TALES FROM THE HARZ MOUNTAINS

waved in solemn pomp, and the sound of the waves seemed to echo in their branches. Suddenly the noble horse stopped, it refused to go on, it trembled in every limb and seemed as if it were bewitched. Brunhilda looked and she also trembled at the terrible sight she beheld. Horse and rider stood on the extreme edge of a yawning precipice. Deep, deep down she could hear the roaring voice of the mountain torrent, while a thousand feet away were the jagged cliffs of the opposite side of this awful chasm. Well might horse and rider tremble on the brink of this terrible gorge. Brunhilda shuddered. For a moment her heart stood still, her courage failed her, and an anxious look passed over her beautiful features. Before her lay death and destruction, behind her the voice of the hateful giant each moment growing louder while on the opposite cliff was safety, and the home of her true-love.

The choice was not hard. Brunhilda will venture the mighty leap over the deep abyss. Perchance she may gain the other side. If not, then death awaits her. "That is better" she cries "than to fall into the hands of Bodo and break my troth with my true-love."

She drew her horse back from the edge of the precipice. Then she turned him again towards the

BRUNHILDA

fearful gorge, and pressing her heel into his flank she urged the noble animal forwards. With one mighty bound the horse and rider left the rock. Like the flight of an eagle they sped through the air.

A joyous cry burst from the lips of the princess when her horse's hoof struck the rock on the opposite side of the great ravine. Then her horse fell exhausted, but the heroic deed was accomplished and Brunhilda was saved. Only her golden crown was lost. It slipped from her head as she crossed the ravine, and fell into a deep pool at the foot of the chasm.

As Bodo saw the princess pass like a floating cloud over the gorge, he uttered a wild cry of anger and rage which echoed like thunder from cliff to cliff. Then he spurred his charger to the edge of the chasm, and he, too, ventured the terrible leap; but the weight of the giant was great, and horse and rider fell with a mighty splash into the torrent below. Here beneath the deep green water lay Brunhilda's crown, and Bodo was transformed into a hound whose duty was ever to guard and protect it. Now and again some covetous man would plunge into the pool in the hope of gaining the crown for himself. But such a one was ever caught by the watchful hound and his lifeless body would be flung upon the bank of the stream.

FAIRY TALES FROM THE HARZ MOUNTAINS

Brunhilda, with a thankful cry and tears in her eyes, flung herself into the arms of the prince, and with a joyful heart he received her as his queen although she brought him no crown and no kingdom.

Above the deep gorge still stands the overhanging rock now known as the "Horsehoof" (Rosztrappe). Here countless wanderers yearly come, and they think of Brunhilda's wonderful leap for they can still see the mark of her horse's hoof deeply impressed in the rock. The river has been called *the Bodo*, since the fateful day that it received the body of the pursuing Giant.

BRUNHILDA'S GOLDEN CROWN

BRUNHILDA'S GOLDEN CROWN

MANY hundred years ago the son of the Count of Regenstein left his native country to join the Crusaders in the Holy Land. The time came for his return but he did not appear, and not only was his father, the Count of Regenstein, anxious and troubled but the daughter of the neighbouring Count of Lauenburg sat daily in the topmost turret of the Castle, eagerly watching the towers of Regenstein in the hope that she should see the flag fluttering in the breeze welcoming her lover's home-coming.

Snowdrops rang their bells to awaken the sleeping flowers; violets, wood-anemones and blue-bells filled the woods with their perfume; the larches clad themselves in green, and yet Alwin of Regenstein came not. Still the fair Minna of Lauenburg watched the bare flag-staff on the towers of Regenstein for the

FAIRY TALES FROM THE HARZ MOUNTAINS

banner which waved not in the wind. The meadows were bright with yellow buttercups and tall white daisies, the grass grew high, the roses bloomed in the hedge-rows but the young man came not and no flag waved over the Castle of Regenstein. The flowers withered, the willows bent their branches in silent sympathy, tears filled the blue eyes of the maiden and the joy of her life, alas! seemed turned to sadness.

The fame of the beauty of this fair young Countess spread far and wide. Minnesingers sang of her wonderful loveliness and noble lords came from distant lands to offer her their love and their titles. But they gained not her heart for she belonged to Alwin who still tarried in the Holy Land, or perhaps he was a prisoner in a Saracen fortress, or alas! he might lie among the dead heroes on some battle-field in Palestine.

The Count of Lauenburg could bear the anxiety no longer and he sent messengers to the Holy Land. On their return they spread the sad news that Alwin had sailed for Europe many months ago, but the ship had been wrecked and none of the crew or passengers had been saved.

Poor Minna was comfortless; the brightness of life had departed, and she felt as if a whirlwind had passed over her soul and left her heart dried and withered like

BRUNHILDA'S GOLDEN CROWN

the flowers in the path of the storm-wind. The more she desired to be left alone with her thoughts of Alwin and the happy days that were gone for ever, so much the more her many suitors came to see her. Some whispered their love, but others boldly asked her to become their bride. To one and all she said it could not be; she begged the noble lords to think no more of her and return to their castles. Still, her untold loveliness was the theme of the minstrel's song and many a brave knight broke a lance in her honour.

Her father forbade her to enter a cloister and commanded that she should choose one of her noble suitors for he felt highly honoured that so many great men should visit his castle. Thus Minna considered awhile how she could free herself from this difficult position, and one morning she said to the Count, "I have decided to obey your wish, dear father, and I will marry the man who is willing to risk his life for me. To prove his affection I offer myself as the prize for the accomplishment of a daring deed which is worthy of the heroes of old and from which even Alwin, were he with us, would not flinch."

The old Count was overjoyed at her decision and pledged his knightly honour that no-one should claim the hand of his daughter until he had shown himself

FAIRY TALES FROM THE HARZ MOUNTAINS

worthy of her by going successfully through the adventure. "Must he seek out a dragon and slay it or shall he overcome roaring lions and other beasts of prey?"

"No", said his daughter softly, but when the deed is proclaimed the minstrels will cease singing my praise and my many lovers will quietly return to their homes.

Scarcely had the words escaped her lips than three gallant young nobles crossed the drawbridge. The first prided himself on his vast possessions, the second on the fame of his ancient family and the third on his burning love for the fair Countess Minna.

The Count of Lauenburg received the three knights in courtly manner and said: "You are doubtless brave and gallant heroes but my daughter's hand is the prize for an unknown act of daring."

"What is the adventure; name the deed" they all demanded together, "and we will risk our lives for the prize."

"You remember the story, my noble friends" said the Count, "how the Princess Brunhilda lost her golden crown in the whirlpool when she took her fearless leap over the River Bodo."

"Who can forget it" they said.

"No one has dared," added the Count, "to venture

BRUNHILDA'S GOLDEN CROWN

into that awful gulf. The cliffs overhang so that no one can climb down them, and the raging river is so confined by the steep rocks that there is no foot-way to that eddying whirlpool. Beneath those circling waters lies the golden crown, but it is jealously guarded by a terrible dog with flaming eyes and sharp teeth ready to fight the bravest if he dare to stretch forth his hand towards the treasure. To obtain this golden crown is no easy task; but I pledge my knightly word and honour that he who brings the crown out of the whirlpool and lays it at my daughter's feet shall claim her for his bride."

The three young knights heard the Count's declaration; but they had not the courage of the heroes of old and the adventure was not for them. They mounted their steeds and silently rode away without so much as a farewell greeting.

The news of the Countess Minna's offer to marry the man who should bring her Brunhilda's golden crown spread far and wide. Many knights at first thought they would risk the adventure—some for love of Minna and some for ambition. But when they looked at the roaring cataract their hearts failed them and they drew back. Some climbed the high land to the place where the Princess Brunhilda took her flying leap; but they

FAIRY TALES FROM THE HARZ MOUNTAINS

felt dizzy as they looked down the precipice and saw the foaming river plunge into the eddying whirlpool, with the roar of pealing thunder. So the bravest became faint-hearted and no one had sufficient courage to undertake the wager and climb down the cliff or trust himself to the angry river.

Thus Minna had gained her desire; she was left undisturbed and her many wooers took their departure.

One day the Count had invited the nobles and knights of Harzland to a great festival at Lauenburg, and while they were feasting the watchman blew his horn to announce the arrival of another guest. So the Count and his daughter went to the castle gate to welcome the new visitor. As the door opened a young man sprang from his horse. He shouted out joyfully the name of "Minna"; and the young maiden cried "Alwin! Alwin!" and flew to his outstretched arms which closed around her in a long embrace.

"O, dear heart," she exclaimed with tears of joy, "Thou sleepest not in the depths of the ocean."

"I live," he cried, "to be thine for ever, my Minna."

After fond embraces and many kisses of welcome the old Count led the happy pair to the great hall of the castle where his noble friends and neighbours were gathered together. "We must have another banquet,"

BRUNHILDA'S GOLDEN CROWN

said the Count, "to honour the betrothal of my daughter. Alwin of Regenstein has returned; God has saved him from the waves of the ocean, and has delivered him from the dungeon of the Moors. In spite of a host of wooers my daughter has kept faith with her Alwin even though she feared he was dead. Heaven has blessed her and rewarded her faith; in a few weeks, noble lords and ladies, I beg you to accept an invitation to my daughter's wedding."

At first the guests were dumb with astonishment; then some of them came forward and expressed their good wishes to Alwin and Minna. A number of knights and nobles, however, gathered together in the background. They murmured some words of indignation and shook their clenched fists at the happy pair while their eyes flashed angrily. They derived no pleasure from the sight of the merry Alwin and the light-hearted Minna; they followed them about the hall with dark and angry looks while they received congratulations from many friends.

At last one of their number stood up in the middle of the hall and thus addressed the Count of Lauenburg:—"You seem quick in giving your invitation to the wedding, good Count. Has Alwin of Regenstein already plunged into the dreaded whirlpool and brought

FAIRY TALES FROM THE HARZ MOUNTAINS

Brunhilda's golden crown from out the circling waters? Has he indeed fulfilled the one condition which gives him a right to the hand of your daughter, or are we to believe that you have deceived so many brave men and broken your knightly word and honour"?

The speaker was silent and the old Count looked round and met only stern and indignant looks.

Then Alwin drew his sword and struck it so hard on the floor of the hall that the very rafters echoed with the sound. "Who dares to say that the Count of Lauenburg breaks his word" he shouted, "Has he not pledged his honour; and know this, friends and neighbours, knights and nobles, that Alwin of Regenstein will never take Minna of Lauenburg to the home of his fathers until he has succeeded in laying Brunhilda's golden crown at the feet of his bride."

Minna turned deadly pale at these strong brave words and fell into her lover's arms saying:—"Will you dare the impossible, dear heart? Hast thou been clutched from the ocean wave only thus to find another grave beneath the waters of the River Bodo. It will break my heart to think that I have caused thy death for this adventure was planned in the darkest hour of my life to save me from the importunity of many

BRUNHILDA'S GOLDEN CROWN

woosers. Alas! Alas! that I should ever have set myself as the prize for such an awful deed."

Alwin calmed her with flattering words. "My own true love" he said, "fear nothing; the danger is slight—this peril is in truth very small compared with adventures I have safely passed through. Have I not fought more terrible beasts than this dog in the whirlpool? Have I not been forced by the Moors to seek pearls on the floor of the ocean, and have I not overcome monsters of the deep more terrible than the scimitar of the Saracen, and if this were not so I would sacrifice all, nay life itself, for thee, dearest Minna."

For many weeks Alwin sought how he could reach the whirlpool in safety, but his efforts were all in vain. The cliffs were too precipitous for any climbers to descend them, and the river filled the narrow gorge with such a furious cataract of boiling raging water that he knew he dare not trust himself to the stream or he would be dashed to pieces before he could reach the whirlpool. Even the gnomes and the elves of the forest laughed at his daring and considered the adventure as a piece of wild madness. Thus the autumn came and passed and winter arrived making everything cold and comfortless.

However, one morning Alwin came joyfully to the

FAIRY TALES FROM THE HARZ MOUNTAINS

Lauenburg. "Minna", said he, "thou wilt soon be mine! yes! mine for ever! for all the difficulty is removed."

Poor Minna looked at him sadly fearing he had lost his reason; but he continued:—"Even cold winter has aided us for he has built a bridge of strong ice over the river. Bodo no longer prevents me from reaching the whirlpool, and he has actually become a path to the place where the treasure lies which alone is free from ice. Thus my adventure is easier than I thought, whilst against the dog I have no fears for I carry upon me an amulet I brought from the Holy Land. So without doubt I shall now succeed."

In vain were Minna's tears and warnings. "Tempt not Providence," she cried, "Be content, some other way will open before us,"

Alwin's resolve was made. Neither tears nor entreaties could move him and the next day he determined to try his fate. The news of his adventure spread far and wide from place to place; and the rumour that the young Count of Regenstein would risk his life for Minna of Lauenburg was heard in the village and was carried over the mountains.

Winter still held the stream fast in his stern embrace. Instead of foam flung high up the steep sides of granite

BRUNHILDA'S GOLDEN CROWN

cliffs and the roar of raging water all was peaceful and still; only here and there some hole or fissure in the ice showed the hurrying river like some great yellow serpent making his way towards the whirlpool. The great cliffs rose so high on either side of the narrow gorge that their summits seemed lost in the clouds; but Winter had clothed their nakedness with pillars of glittering ice, wonderful cities with wall and tower and turret, and fairy forests with crystal trees and sparkling ferns.

In spite of the intense cold a vast crowd of knights and ladies, farmers and peasants, merchants and town-folk made their way up the ice-bound Bodo until further progress was stopped by the whirlpool which Winter, in vain, could not cover with ice. The foam of the angry water was blown in their faces and they could see the seething eddying waves whirl round and round the awful abysm. Beneath those waters lay the golden crown.

At last Alwin came with firm step and earnest look. He was clad in tight-fitting hosen and tunic, and around his neck hung the amulet he had brought from the Holy Land. He had received the last Sacraments and the Chaplain at Regenstein was offering prayers for his safety.



Alwin fighting the Hound

The crowd made way for him. Some regarded him as a hero, others looked at him indifferently, and a few evidently considered he was mad to risk his life in such a foolhardy venture.

Alwin walked firm and erect and his page handed him a dagger to combat the hound and an iron chain wherewith to bind him. Then with one look towards Heaven and a prayer upon his lips he plunged into the raging whirlpool. When the foaming waters had closed over him a long silence followed. No one moved; no one uttered a sound; all waited in dread suspense. After a time there came an awful howl—so

BRUNHILDA'S GOLDEN CROWN

loud that it drowned the voice of the angry waters. Louder and louder it grew and it sounded as if ten thousand wolves were in deadly combat. Every one trembled. At that moment a beam of light from the winter—sun illumined the whirlpool and all beheld a strange form arise, but just as it became visible it again disappeared in the depths of the water. At the same time the howling became weaker and a ray of hope filled every heart. “He has succeeded,” they whispered one to another, “and he has snatched the golden crown from the savage hound.” Then gazing steadfastly in the water they actually beheld the brave swimmer rising upwards and holding the golden crown in his hand. With a loud voice Alwin cried, “The dog is chained, and crown and bride are mine.”

A joyous hurrah greeted these brave words and echoed from cliff to cliff. Alas! they shouted too soon. In the depths of the abysm could be heard the rending of chains and the awful howling of that unearthly hound, and just as Alwin was reaching safety a huge black form with eyes like burning coals neared the surface of the water. A fearful struggle ensued between man and hound and then both disappeared in the depths of the whirlpool. Horror seized the throng of spectators and after a while they saw drops of blood on the

FAIRY TALES FROM THE HARZ MOUNTAINS

white foam, and then the water was, for a time, dyed a deep purple.

The howling ceased; but Alwin never again returned and only the amulet was cast up by the waves and thrown on the edge of the ice. It was taken to the unhappy Minna and she was told the sad ending to this gallant adventure. She heard the story with great composure and with the amulet in her hand she entered the Convent at Wendhusen where she ended her days as a cloistered nun.

THE SEVEN SPRINGS.



THE SEVEN SPRINGS

A CERTAIN King of Harzland had seven daughters, and there came from England seven noble brothers to try and win the love of these fair maidens.

These beautiful princesses had looked with pride and coldness on their many suitors who had come from the far away Danube and the shores of the Baltic. But when they saw the fair-haired, broad shouldered Englishmen, their hearts beat fast, their eyes laughed, and it was not long before they had plighted their troth, with the strangers.

“Who are these foreigners?” sneered their rivals. “Shall these sons of the ocean succeed, where we have failed; shall they carry away the sunlight from our mountains while we idly toy with shield and spear.”

FAIRY TALES FROM THE HARZ MOUNTAINS

On every side these young princes met dark looks, and heard angry words. "Not without a struggle" cried the courtiers, "shall you take away the princesses from our land."

The princes buckled on their swords, and armed themselves with lance and shield. But the princesses fell into their arms, and implored them not to risk their lives. "Suppose you fall" they exclaimed, "think of the misery of our lot. Let us fly together at midnight when the full moon shall light our way and the courtiers are asleep."

"Who ever heard that hate slumbered, or that jealousy did not find out her rival's tactics?" The courtiers had discovered their plan of escape, and with all their retainers set forth in pursuit of the seven princesses and their English lovers.

"What is that glittering in the distance?" said the princes. "It looks like armed men and shining spears."

"It is nothing" said the maidens "except the woodland stream in the moonlight."

"Why do the leaves rustle?"

"It is nothing. Our flight has merely disturbed the sleeping deer."

"Hark! we hear murmurs and mutterings!"

THE SEVEN SPRINGS

“It is nothing. Fear not, it is only the sound of a waterfall.”

“Ah! we hear whisperings.”

“It is nothing. It is only the wind sighing in the trees.”

But the whisperings grew into angry cries, and the murmurs into shouts of rage. Then they knew that they were followed.

The Englishmen dismounted, placed the princesses behind them, and then stood like an iron wall between them and the foe. A terrible battle was fought. Swords and spears flashed in the moonlight, and the shout of those who struggled and the wail of those who watched, drowned the murmur of the night wind. The dead lay in heaps on the ground killed by the English princes. But at last the eldest fell, and then one after another the others were overpowered. That was in truth a gallant fight for the seven had killed one hundred foemen.

So the cry of battle was hushed, the night wind sighed soft and low, and the conquerors praised the dead while they made funeral pyres of sacred oak and white thorn for the seven English princes. Then they collected their ashes in seven urns, and buried them under seven mounds near the spot where their heroic lives were ended.

FAIRY TALES FROM THE HARZ MOUNTAINS

The seven maidens returned to their father's castle, but they arose each dawn, and silently went to the place where their heroes slept their long, long sleep. There they stood like fading flowers, and their tears flowed fast. No comfort came to their hearts, and no colour to their cheeks.

Each maiden planted a wild pear tree on the grave of her hero, and for seven long months they watered the trees with their tears. One evening found them seated as usual in a half circle near the trees they had tended, but this night they wept no more. Joy filled their souls, for behold! where their tears had watered the ground were seven springs of clear crystal water. The longed for hour had come when their spirits should take wings and fly to their loved ones, and the next morning they were found lifeless still holding each other by the hand.

THE THREE WOOD—NYMPHS

THE THREE WOODNYMPHS

IN the far away past the moon shed her silver glory over mountain and moor, and wood and valley, just as she does to-day. The twinkling stars in the great dark dome of heaven were reflected then in the lakes and the rivers just as we may see them on any starlight night. Still, there is a change in the world and the fair water-nymphs and the beautiful wood-nymphs dance no longer in every wood and in every valley, for man has cut down their groves and felled many of the giant trees whose whispering leaves told strange stories of a wonderful region we know so little about.

In those happy days the moonlight fell in a glorious flood over the forest of the Harz Mountains and the silver glory of the Queen of the night as she mounted her throne in the sky was reflected in every rippling wave of the dark mountain lakes and the river Bodo.

FAIRY TALES FROM THE HARZ MOUNTAINS

Then the lovely water-nymphs and wood-nymphs all came forth, and with bright merry songs and with gay wild dances swept through the moonlit glades of the



The knight and the Three Woodnymphs

forest. However, the joyousness of those glad days did not last for ever for a great king came to the land and his coming brought sighing and sadness. Many thousands of stately trees were laid low by the

THE THREE WOODNYMPHS

woodman's axe and no longer at night could be heard the song of the nymphs; no eye could now behold their lovely forms for they passed no longer hand in hand through the forest groves. The few remaining trees sighed for the glory of the past and sang a low dirge for their sisters.

The Great King bestowed one of the forest-hills upon a favourite Knight. This fortunate knight not only built for himself a beautiful castle but with incessant labour he uprooted the trees and drained the land. In the blazing heat of the sun he dug his soil and he felled his trees, and he was so busy that he never heard the murmuring leaves bewail the misery he was hourly creating. At last he had completed his labours with the exception of felling three fair elms that still stood on the crest of the hill.

It was late in the day and the knight rested awhile, glad in the thought that his work was so nearly ended. He laid down in the grass near the three tall elms, and being weary with so much toil and labour he soon fell into a deep sleep. Slowly the pale moon rose in the sky. The three wood-nymphs came forth from their homes and sadly and slowly they paced the green sward and sighed for their sisters who were all destroyed.

FAIRY TALES FROM THE HARZ MOUNTAINS

"We are the last of our race," moaned one, "and the cruel knight intends to destroy us to-morrow."

"Yes," said another, "he rests from his labour only to gain strength for our final destruction. We shall never again dance on our mountain, we shall never again sing to the laughing wind or play hide and seek with the water-nymphs. Alas! Alas! we must die like our sisters and our race will then be ended. Let us say farewell to each other for at sunrise our days are for ever finished. The water-nymphs do not know of our sad fate. Happy sisters, they, alone, are safe from the axe of the woodman."

"Let us look on the bright side of life," said the third nymph, "for it is well said that every cloud has a silver lining. Let us implore the knight to spare us so that our race may not perish, and surely he will grant us this favour for we have heard him sigh as the beautiful trees fell under his cruel axe. Let us tell him that every night when the moon shines we will plough the land, sow the seed, and watch for the harvest. Although we are only maidens yet we will truly serve him if he will have pity and save the last of a noble race and destroy not our homes."

The knight had listened quietly to the strange conversation, and then he exclaimed, "By all that is good

THE THREE WOODNYMPHS

and all that is true I and mine will protect you, fair creatures, and cursed be the soul that dares do you injury. I will not only save your homes but I will protect them with my life's blood. But who are you, bright maidens, and what are your names? Is this a dream or is it reality?"

The wood-nymphs were alarmed at the voice of the knight, and vanishing into their trees he heard them say, "It is no dream that has deceived you, good knight. We are the last of the wood-nymphs that have for centuries lived in this glorious forest, and if you will protect these three stately elms we shall be for ever grateful."

As the words died away the rosy glow of the sunrise illumined the mountains, and the leaves of the elm trees rustled and murmured one to the other; but the knight heard only the sound and understood not the words.

"It is no dream", he exclaimed, "the wood-nymphs are here in the trees and they shall be forever protected. Fair creatures," he cried extending his arms towards the trees. "Your homes are safe and I and mine will ever be their guardians if you will only stay with us."

The fields around the elm trees were from that day

FAIRY TALES FROM THE HARZ MOUNTAINS

the most fruitful in all the land; while at night when the moon shed her silver light on the mountains three lovely maidens might be seen with plough and rakes at their labour in the fields.

When the days of the knight were numbered and he lay on his death-bed he implored his son to take great care of the elms so that he might rear up new branches from their roots when they became old and decayed. So the land flourished and was more fruitful than all other fields in the Harzland, and the three nymphs toiled each night, when the pale moon shed her silver beams over all the country-side.

In later times the Manor came into the possession of a man who cared neither for elves nor fairies nor wood-nymphs nor water-nymphs, and he called the story of the Three Wood-nymphs a foolish fable and he determined to cut down the trees.

When the axe was sharpened and the workmen were ready an old shepherd passed who raised his voice in a warning tone, saying. "He who cuts down the elms undermines his own fortune; let that be cared for, which your forefathers honoured."

The Lord of the Manor smiled at the old shepherd and ordered the woodmen to fell the three trees.

THE THREE WOODNYMPHS

From that day the three nymphs were never again seen ploughing the land by the pale moonlight, and from that day the fields were no longer fruitful, and when the Lord of the Manor died he had nothing to bequeath to his son save an inheritance of poverty, debts, and barren fields.

THE THREE GOBLETS

THE THREE GOBLETS

THE full moon shed a silvery light over the wooded valley of the Selke throwing into strong relief the high towers of the grand old Castle of Falkenstein. Only one light shone through any of the windows for everyone in the Castle was in Dreamland except the Countess Helen, and she sat all alone making warm garments for the poor. Day was too short for her good actions and so she burnt the midnight oil. Men called her the *good* Countess, and well might they do so for she was beloved by all the country folk far and near. Wherever there was sorrow or suffering, or pain, or misery there was the Countess to be found ministering to the sick and the needy like an Angel of God.

Presently the sleepy porter at the outer gate was aroused by a loud knock and a rough, but not unkind

FAIRY TALES FROM THE HARZ MOUNTAINS

voice, begged the help of the Countess on an errand of mercy. The door was unbarred, and a strange



Countess Helen

small hump-backed man entered. Under his hood was seen a wrinkled but good-humoured face, his white beard fell to his knees, and his glittering eyes were

THE THREE GOBLETS

turned with an imploring look on the face of the Countess.

"Good Lady" he exclaimed, "our Queen is very ill, and in sore need of help. Will you come with me to her palace"?

"Willingly", said the Countess. Is it far?" "No," said the little man. "It is only a short distance along the valley; the way is easy and the moon is full."

So the Countess and her strange guide set forth together on their midnight walk. They were not alone however for the Countess saw by the light of the moon that numberless forms, many of them only a few inches in height, were around her. Some were dancing in front of her and strewing flowers in her way; others were springing from cliff to cliff and watching her progress with sweet smiles. Some were deformed like her companion, but others were lovely creatures. One and all sang a low sweet song of grateful praise of the Countess, and their voices sounded like the rippling stream, or the breath of the evening wind in the leaves of the trees.

The little man led the way, and at last stood still before a high rock. Three times he struck it with the back of his hand, and behold! a stone opened suddenly, and the Countess found herself in a large subterranean

FAIRY TALES FROM THE HARZ MOUNTAINS

hall whose walls were adorned with crystals. On the far side of this great chamber the elf Queen lay on a bed of moss in great suffering.

"See there is our Queen," cried the little guide with tears in his eyes. "Help her if it be in your power, good lady." Now the Countess Helen was very learned in all kinds of herbs and healing virtues, and soon gave the little elf Queen great relief.

"Receive our warmest thanks, dear Lady" said the Queen, "you have saved my life and I am not unmindful of your kind actions, so I beg you will accept these three glass goblets and these three golden balls. Good fortune, dear Countess, is easily shattered like glass. So take great care of the goblets and see that the golden balls are not lost. The good fortune of your family is bound up in the fate of these goblets. Your race will end if they are broken."

The Queen beckoned to the little gnome who had brought the Countess and he led her away from the under-ground palace with its glittering walls and vaulted roof, and after opening the door in the rock he took her back to the Castle of Falkenstein.

In the morning the Countess Helen awoke and at first she thought she had dreamed of an elf Queen she had saved from death and a little gnome with

THE THREE GOBLETS

glittering eyes, a rough voice, and a poor deformed body. But the sunlight fell on her table and there stood the three glass goblets and the three golden balls, and then she knew that her visit to the elf Queen was a reality and no dream.

Years passed and one night the descendants of the good Countess Helen kept high festival. The clocks were striking midnight when the young Counts called for the glass goblets to be brought into the hall so that they might drink the health of their guests in them. They ridiculed the care which their forefathers had bestowed upon the goblets and the idea that in any way their fate was bound up in the preservation of the glass vessels. In vain their mother tried to divert their thoughts; but all to no purpose. So the glass goblets were brought and filled with wine, and each of the brothers took one and raising it on high shouted out: "Health and happiness to our guests" and as they hit them together one was shattered into a thousand fragments. The music ceased, the guests were alarmed and a dread of some impending misfortune weighed on everyone.

Next day the brothers left the Castle in a carriage, but the horses became restive and unmanageable.

FAIRY TALES FROM THE HARZ MOUNTAINS

Wildly they rushed along the road, until at last the carriage was overturned. When help came it was found that the two brothers lay dead beneath the broken carriage.

From that sad day the greatest care has been bestowed upon the two remaining glass goblets, and one is now preserved at Hinnenburg and the other at Falkenstein.

THE PROUD PRINCESS

THE PROUD PRINCESS

ONCE upon a time a princess and her father lived in a castle in the Harz Mountains. She was very fair and very beautiful; but alas! she was so proud of her beauty she would scornfully tell her noble lovers that they were only fit to marry her waiting maids and no one should wed her unless he were as handsome as she was beautiful.

However, her father had arranged that she should marry the brave son of a neighbouring prince and he had already fixed the day of the wedding.

One day during the hunt the princess was separated from her friends and wandering up a lonely valley she came upon a placid lake which reflected in its still waters the oak trees that had grown around it for a thousand years.

Here on a green mossy bank beside this deep clear

FAIRY TALES FROM THE HARZ MOUNTAINS

lake lay a young knight fast asleep. He was the most handsome and splendid man the princess had ever seen and as she beheld him her soul fell in love with him.



The Princess and the sleeping knight

When the young man awoke he was equally enchanted by the loveliness of the noble maiden before him, and after exchanging words of love and affection they plighted their eternal troth.

THE PROUD PRINCESS

The princess did not forget that the morning sun would rise on the day her father had fixed for her wedding. So she returned to the castle in order to collect her jewels and ornaments promising to meet her handsome lover at dawn and fly with him to his distant home.

On her way to the castle the princess passed a holy man who lived all alone in his hermitage, and knowing him well she asked him for a drink of water. He satisfied her modest request and as he looked at her countenance his face grew sad and he raised his voice in earnest entreaty, saying: "Princess, you are wandering on an evil path; but know this, most lovely of women, that even now you are in the clutches of an evil spirit."

Scornful laughter greeted the good man's solemn words and she cried: "Silence, you are an old croaking raven and you do not know that to morrow will be the happiest merriest day in all my life." With these words she rode away, and as the old man returned to his quiet cave she heard him singing the old song:

"Though golden curls may cluster round thy head,
Though eyes be clear and blue and lips be red,
Yet, charming maid! to morrow you'll be dead."

On her return to the castle she deceived her father and her bridegroom with her light-heartedness, and

FAIRY TALES FROM THE HARZ MOUNTAINS

with her winning ways. Then she retired to her own apartments not to sleep, however, but to prepare for her flight.

Thus the night passed and when the thrush sang his morning lay to greet the rising sun, the princess secretly left her home and blithely ran down the steep road from the castle, and as she crossed the meadows her feet lightly trod the flowers and grass still covered with dew which sparkled like diamonds in the morning sunlight.

At the trysting-place in the valley she could see the tall figure of her handsome lover on his coal black charger waiting, for her.

"You are expecting me, dear heart", she cried, and with the help of his hand she sprang on the horse before him.

"Hasten away!" she laughed, "before anyone discovers my flight. Are we far from thy home, dear heart?"

"Not far!" he replied.

She pressed her rosy lips to his and kissed and embraced him passionately. "I must warm myself on thy breast", she said, "for the morning breeze has chilled me; but thou my beloved, art cold to-day. Why, thou art icy cold" she added shivering.

THE PROUD PRINCESS

"Wait a little" he replied in a strange stern voice, "thou shalt find my castle warm enough, I assure thee."

She looked at him in surprise, but at that moment her lover drove his spurs into his horse's flanks and the noble creature flew away like the storm-wind and it seemed as if his feet never touched the ground.

"Why", cried the princess, half fainting and holding on to her lover, "thy charger is carrying us back to my father's castle."

He made no reply, but his face was full of bitter scorn and as they passed through the castle gate his voice echoed through every chamber as he cried: "Awake! grey-haired prince, thy daughter has chosen her mate and she flies with him to his home. Awake! poor deceived bridegroom, awake! fair wedding guests and behold how I carry my bride to the bridal chamber."

The princess shuddered as if she had been shaken by a thunderclap and her cheeks, which had been rosy at dawn, became white as the winter snow on the Brocken. Yesterday she adored her lover and felt as if she could make any sacrifice he might ask of her: today his passionate love seemed chilled and cold, and his merry happy smiles were turned into scornful grimaces.

"Let me go!" cried the Princess anxiously. "Let



The terrible fate of the Proud Princess

THE PROUD PRINCESS

me go!" and she hid her face in her mantle for all the inmates of the castle had gathered together to look at the pair. Then the old prince stepped forward and endeavoured to take hold of the bridle of the great black charger of the Robber Knight; but its rider turned its head and impelled it to walk out of the courtyard and across the drawbridge, and down the steep road to the plain below. At first the pace was slow for the Robber Knight wished to give time for the old prince and his knights and his friends to mount and follow them. Then the speed was quickened so that the long white veil of the princess floated like a pennon behind them and nearly touched the foremost of the pursuers. After this the pace was increased still more and the coal black charger plunged up the narrow mountain gorge which led to the lake where the princess had first seen her handsome lover.

The rider at last drew rein and stayed his steed on the very edge of a deep dark chasm. "Welcome noble guests", he shouted scornfully. "You shall now see how I will lead my bride to the bridal chamber. Be patient, dear one", he said addressing the princess.

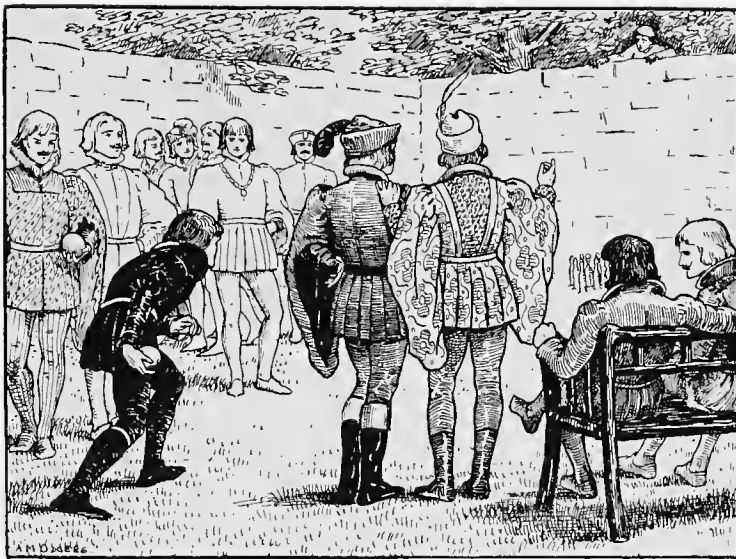
Suddenly a cry of horror escaped the lips of the princess for the knight bent over her as if to kiss her: but instead of kisses a hissing flame shot out of his

FAIRY TALES FROM THE HARZ MOUNTAINS

mouth. At the same moment his knightly form changed into an awful monster, and his horns and cloven hoof showed that the unfortunate princess had fallen into the hands of an evil power. The hideous creature stroked her cheeks with his claws; but his caresses were not those of love for they tore her flesh and he only laughed at her cries of anguish and pain.

All this time the old prince, his knights, and his friends stood horror stricken. Then the evil monster seized the princess in his claws and at the same moment the beautiful charger was transformed into a flaming dragon, and amidst a cloud of sulphurous vapour the evil monster, the flaming dragon, and the beautiful princess disappeared for ever into the deep dark chasm.

THE GOLDEN NINEPINS



THE GOLDEN NINEPINS

AT some little distance from Treseburg in the beautiful valley of the Bodo is Schöneburg. Once upon a time it was a famous fortress, but now it is only a heap of fallen stones half covered with rank weeds and thick brushwood. Few travellers visit it as notwithstanding its commanding position, the surrounding trees obscure the view. Now and again the hasty step of a sportsman passes the ruins and sometimes a cowherd wanders here while his cows find pasture below.

FAIRY TALES FROM THE HARZ MOUNTAINS

On St. John's Day, many years ago, a cowherd followed the path which led to the Schöneburg while his dog guarded the cattle in the meadows. He thought of the glorious past, of the splendid castle, of the noble knights and grand dames who lived there, and of the treasure which still lies buried beneath the ruined pile.

It was a hot dreamy day and the beech leaves all whispered together while the music of the tinkling cowbells was wafted softly upwards by the gentle breeze. Suddenly he thought he heard the sound of merry laughter under the elms whose long branches extend over part of the ruins. He was astonished having thought he was quite alone; but he was still more surprised at all he saw when he looked over the ruined wall. In the courtyard of the Castle he beheld twelve handsome knights clad in the quaint costume of their time, enjoying themselves with a game of ninepins.

The cowherd wondered whether he was asleep or awake. He rubbed his eyes; but there could be no mistake; he was not asleep and all around him were the elms, and the oaks, and the bushes he knew so well, while in the meadows below he could see his cows and his good dog keeping watch, and from the distant valley came the hum of the workshops near the river. It was midday and he saw all that happened quite

THE GOLDEN NINEPINS

plainly. There were the twelve gay knights laughing and joking as they rolled their balls on the green sward against the ninepins. Presently one of the knights noticed the cowherd and beckoned him to come nearer. This he did timidly for another knight ordered him, somewhat sharply, to pick up the fallen ninepins and set them up in their places again.

For a full hour he was thus busily occupied, and when, at last, no more balls hit the ninepins he looked up and found that the knights had all disappeared.

“It must have been a dream”, he mused; and yet that could hardly be for there were the ninepins on the grass beside him. He thought of his neighbours in Altenbraach, and how they would laugh at him when he told them his story. So to convince his friends that it was no dream he determined to take the ninepins back with him. However, they were so heavy that he could only carry one in his pocket. So he selected the middle one which is called the king, and then he drove his cows back to the village.

His wife and children and neighbours quietly listened to his story of the twelve knights, their fine clothes, and their merry-makings; but they shook their heads sadly and were afraid the poor man was going out of his mind. So he felt in his pocket for the ninepin as

FAIRY TALES FROM THE HARZ MOUNTAINS

a proof of his tale. However, it was so tightly wedged in the pocket that he found it difficult to bring out, and when he did so it accidentally fell to the floor and emitted a sound like metal. No one now doubted the cowherd's story for the ninepin was found to be made of pure gold, and everyone hastened to the ruins to find the remaining eight ninepins. Alas! they were all made of wood.

The twelve fine knights were never seen again on the Schöneburg although many persons hoped to pick up the ninepins for them when they played in the courtyard of the old ruined castle. The cowherd, however, sold his golden ninepin for an enormous sum of money, and bought a beautiful mansion in the Harz Mountains where his descendants still reside.

THE ENCHANTED FLOWER



THE ENCHANTED FLOWER

A few ivy-clad walls, a ruined tower and one or two roofless buildings are all that now remain of the once famous castle of Lauenburg.

Meadow sweet, dock and nettle, large white daisies with yellow eyes, sweet-scented woodbine and tall rank grass half hide the mass of fallen débris. Yet, here the children of Stecklenburg love to spend a summer afternoon. The boys climb the crumbling walls or wrestle with each other on the grass-grown courtyard; while the girls seek wild-flowers to tie up into nosegays or weave into festoons and garlands.

It was on St. John's Day one hundred years ago that the children of Stecklenburg spent their holiday

FAIRY TALES FROM THE HARZ MOUNTAINS

in the ruins of Lauenburg Castle. The merry crowd of boys and girls were soon busy playing in the great courtyard, climbing the ruined walls or gathering the wild-flowers, when suddenly a fair-haired lad who had climbed to the top of the rampart of an old tower cried out in wild astonishment that he had found a wonderful flower. This beautiful blossom seemed to smile on the little boy as it looked up at him and he at once felt that there was something strange and unearthly about it.

Had not all the children heard from their mothers and their grandmothers the story of the beautiful maiden who refused to return the love of one of the fierce proud Counts of Lauenburg, and through the wonderful magic of a clever enchantment was transformed into a flower just as he was on the point of carrying her away? Had not they also heard that on St. John's Day the flower bloomed and the lovely maiden wandered through the ruins?

"Is not this the enchanted flower?" whispered the children one to another. Then one of the boys, bolder than the others, climbed the tower to gather the flower; but as he stretched out his hand he suddenly heard the flower say "Do not pluck me!" The boy quickly descended and the children fled away at the sound of

THE ENCHANTED FLOWER

the unearthly voice. The boy felt ashamed that he should run away at the sound of nothing more dreadful than the sweet clear tones of a gentle voice, so he again climbed the tower and as he once more stretched forth his hand to break the stem of the plant the soft winning voice exclaimed "Do not pluck me."

"Come down!" screamed the children from below. "Come down! come down!" they cried, and some of them fled away; but the boy knelt on the top of the wall of the tower and he had actually grasped the stalk with his hand when suddenly out of a mass of wall-flower came the head of an evil-looking serpent with cold cruel eyes, and with a loud hissing sound the terrible creature darted towards the boy. He drew back in terror and fell from the top of the rampart into a mass of nettles and thorns covering a pile of fallen rubbish. There he lay with broken limbs in pain and agony, while his playmates ran down to Stecklenburg to narrate his sad misfortune. At last his father and elder brothers came to his help and carefully carried him home, and after many months of helplessness and pain he was able to crawl about; but alas! he was for ever a cripple although he lived to a good old age.

On another St. John's Day the children of Stecklen-

FAIRY TALES FROM THE HARZ MOUNTAINS

burg spent their holiday in the old ruins of Lauenburg when they again saw the beautiful flower; but this time they ran away when they heard the sweet soft voice saying, "Do not pluck me", for they all remembered the sad fate of their playmate.

One quiet thoughtful girl remained behind. It seemed to her that the flower had said, "Pluck me!" instead of "Do not pluck me". So she gazed silently into the open face of the lovely lily when there came a gentle voice saying quite distinctly, "Pluck me: Pluck me."

The girl came nearer to the flower when suddenly the hideous serpent raised its head from out the leaves, and showing its forked tongue made a terrible hissing sound. The young girl drew back her hand in fear not daring to gather the flower, and she hurried away in spite of the repeated cries of the enchanted flower, "Do pluck me! O! do pluck me!"

The girl was a very thoughtful child and she felt sure that the flower must be some wonderful magic bloom to be thus enabled to speak with a human voice and doubtless the awful serpent was nothing more terrible than a phantom and could do no hurt or harm. These thoughts gave her fresh courage and next morning she went again to the ruins but the hissing serpent and the lovely flower had both alike vanished.

THE ENCHANTED FLOWER

Years passed and the girl grew to a woman and she gave her heart to a brave youth who, alas! was as poor as she was. She had never forgotten the enchanted flower, the pleading voice, and terrible hissing serpent. So it happened that on St. John's Day she and her sweetheart wended their steps to the old ruins of Lauenburg Castle to fill their sacks with grass and herbs. Her thoughts wandered back to that other St. John's Day when the flower so piteously begged her to pluck it; tears filled her eyes as she thought of what might have happened if she had only been brave and done as the voice had asked her. Her sweetheart tried to comfort her, and when she told him the story of the enchanted flower, he, too, longed for a chance to gather the beautiful bloom for everyone knew that the Maiden of Lauenburg was the guardian of untold wealth. Had he not seen blue flames flicker and dance over the hidden treasure in the farm garden; but alas! he had neglected to seek it? Never again would he miss such a golden opportunity; no, not even if the gnomes were near and tried to deceive him.

His thoughts were suddenly interrupted by a low call from his companion. She held his arm with one hand and pointed with the other to the top of the tower. There on the rampart grew the wonderful flower, fair

FAIRY TALES FROM THE HARZ MOUNTAINS

and beautiful, the most perfect lily that human eyes have ever seen or human thought conceived. This was the enchanted flower of Lauenburg for which her tears had flowed. The flower moved slightly as if it were greeting her, and then like some low sweet song came the words "Pluck me! pluck me!" The youth, too, looked at the flower and as his eyes gazed at the lovely bloom he seemed inspired, and stepping forward he raised his hand to gather the wonderful lily. At the same moment the serpent raised its terrible head in the very way the maiden had told him. The scales round its twisting body glittered in the sunlight like the armour of some ancient knight; two cold glittering eyes looked upon him with deep craft and cruelty; and in its open mouth he could see sharp teeth and a pointed tongue like a poisoned arrow. The evil-looking monster trembled with rage and anger.

At the sight of this dreadful reptile his courage forsook him. He drew back in alarm, and grasping the hand of the maiden he would have fled away with her. As his courage sank her courage rose, and with a fond look at the youth by her side and an upward glance towards heaven she climbed the rampart for the flower was now piteously calling to her. The terrible serpent with its poisoned fangs and pointed tongue did

THE ENCHANTED FLOWER

not terrify the brave maiden. She raised her hand against the monster who retreated before her until she reached the flower which she held with a firm grasp as she boldly plucked it from its stem. At the same moment the serpent suddenly disappeared and then the scene was changed.

Where the flower had been stood a fair young maiden clad in a white robe. She smiled brightly at the astonished pair of young people and led them to a vault at the foot of the tower which they had not previously noticed. In this dark treasure-chamber sparkled and glittered thousands and thousands of costly vessels and trinkets made of gold and silver and set with precious stones. The Lauenburg maiden held them up to the bewildered youth and his brave companion, and it seemed like a dream as they received these valuable gifts and packed them away in the sacks they had brought for grass and herbs. When the bags were quite full they placed the heavy burdens on their backs, and as they departed the beautiful Lauenburg maiden smiled pleasantly on them, and, then, like a fair white cloud in the morning light, she silently vanished away.

The youth and the maiden returned to Steckenlenburg, half doubting whether these strange experiences

FAIRY TALES FROM THE HARZ MOUNTAINS

would turn out to be only a dream, and the gold and silver in the sacks would be transformed by magic into stones, or earth, or coals. Their fears, however, were all groundless. The treasures remained and turned out to be worth an enormous sum of money. So the happy youth and the joyous maiden were married in the village Church, and having sold a portion of the gifts, which the Lauenburg maiden had given them, they bought a mill in the valley of the Bodo which still remains in their family.

THE TRANSPORTED CASTLE



THE TRANSPORTED CASTLE

IN the midst of the Harz Mountains was an ancient castle with strong walls, great towers, and small vaulted chambers lighted by narrow windows. It was built on the crest of a hill with deep wooded valleys below and great mountains around. Here a noble family had lived from generation to generation until at last one Count was forced to consider seriously, whether he ought not to abandon the old home of his fathers and build a new castle elsewhere, as the old place was far too



The Mannikin in the Moon light

THE TRANSPORTED CASTLE

cramped for his garrison of soldiers and his many retainers. He was loath to leave the place where his ancestors had all been cradled, but what else could be done. He considered the matter from every point of view, and at last he seemed so pre-occupied with his thoughts that his wife asked him what was perplexing him. He told her and she said:—"Why dost thou trouble over this question so much? Hast thou not sought out the protecting Spirit of thy family? He has ever faithfully watched over the destiny of thy house, hast thou not consulted him?"

The Count was pleased with this speech and replied:—"Thou art ever right, my dear wife; I have considered this and now I will lay my desires before this kindly spirit—Thou, too art ever my guardian spirit and thy advice is ever the best. The moon is rising, all is quiet in the castle, so let us ascend the old tower where the pictures of my ancestors hang and their weapons and armour adorn the walls, and there we will call on the protecting spirit of our house."

So they went to the old south east tower of the castle with its narrow windows and low vaulted roof, and the Count called three times to the guardian spirit of his house to come to them. Suddenly in the moonlight they saw a kindly faced mannikin with trustful

FAIRY TALES FROM THE HARZ MOUNTAINS

eyes—but his eyes looked grave when the Count told him his wish to leave the old castle, and his countenance was sad and sorrowful as the Count finished his story.

“Thou, then wouldst forsake this place”, said the Mannikin, “where thy forefathers have all been born and where they died; thou wouldst leave the home they built for their children and their children’s children, where every stone tells the history of their labour, and every room speaks of them; thou wouldst leave the place where they rest in the vault below the Chapel, and where their pictures and their armour adorn the walls of thy castle, because their rooms are too small for thee which were large enough for men who were greater and better than thou art. Thy fathers built this place at great labour and cost and thou wouldst abandon it. Thy wish troubles me sadly for such an idea never entered the minds of thy forefathers.”

The Count bowed his head, but replied with reassuring words:—“Be not too stern, guardian spirit of my house, nothing is dearer to me than the thought of the noble deeds of my ancestors; but build me a new home with large rooms, wide windows, princely halls, and a gay flower garden, hang the pictures of my forefathers on the walls so that my children’s children may see them, and adorn the great halls with the armour

THE TRANSPORTED CASTLE

they fought in for home and for country. Surely they would wish their successors to thrive and prosper and to grow stronger and more powerful. Their castle was large enough in their day for them and their followers, but it will no longer contain my soldiers and my household. Would not my forefathers rejoice to see their successors living in a castle which was so large and stately that all the great nobles of our Harz-land envied it. Willingly would I remain in the castle where my ancestors have lived for so many centuries, where their bones rest, and where the very rooms speak of their lives; where, too, my cradle was rocked and where my son was born. Willingly would I remain in the old home of my fathers were it not that my household has outgrown these narrow chambers. The top of this hill is covered with the old castle and its walls cannot be extended in any direction and I cannot reduce the garrison on account of our powerful neighbours. Thus I am forced to forsake the home of my fathers and seek a new dwelling."

He was silent, and the Mannikin bent his grey head and seemed deep in thought. Then he replied: "I will see what can be done", and he vanished leaving the Count and his wife alone.

The hour of midnight was sounded from the Castle

FAIRY TALES FROM THE HARZ MOUNTAINS

tower, and as the last stroke died away there was heard in the air a great rushing to and fro and a great shouting while the hill trembled and the stout walls of the Castle shook to their rocky foundations. The wind howled through the Valley below and shrieked in the air above as if an earthquake was shaking the land; while through the roaring and crashing of thunder could be heard the words:—"Glide away stones, glide away castle!"

Louder and louder grew the noise and turmoil as the old walls and towers of the Castle reeled and shook; and the Count and Countess hid their heads in their mantles expecting the Castle would fall and bury them under its ruins. At last all was quiet and calm again, and when morning dawned they looked out of the window and they beheld no longer the deep wooded valley with the high mountains around them, but green meadows and smiling villages, and away in the morning light rose the Cathedral towers of Halberstadt and the proud heights of Reinstein.

The guardian spirit had carried out the Count's wish and had transported the old Castle of his fathers to its new home at Wernigerode.

THE WHITE STAG

THE WHITE STAG

MANY years ago the inhabitants of the little hamlet of Treseburg saw a wonderful sight every evening on the top of a high precipice overhanging the River Bodo. On this high land stood a stately white stag looking down into the valley below. For hours the lovely creature stood thus in the early morning. All the children in the little hamlet knew him quite well, and their surprise would have been great if some day he had not appeared in his usual place. For many hundred years the white stag had appeared on this cliff without changing in any way or showing any sign of old age. This was indeed wonderful; but it was still more wonderful that no one had ever been able to approach him. Many sportsmen had endeavoured to stalk this beautiful white stag, but when they came near to his accustomed place on the top of the cliff

FAIRY TALES FROM THE HARZ MOUNTAINS

he had disappeared; although he was plainly visible to those who had remained in the village, who could still see him quietly browsing and wandering on the heights above them.

One morning one of the men in the hamlet, called Hunter, told his neighbours that when he was alone on the mountain the white stag had come to him, rubbed its nose against his arm, ate some of the herbs out of his basket and actually followed him as far as the River Bodo. The villagers shook their heads; but they could not doubt the man's story as he was noted for his great sincerity and love of truth. However, it was just as he said, and another day some of his friends actually saw the white stag hasten to him on the mountain side, eat herbs from his hand and follow him about from place to place as he filled his basket with healing herbs. The stag was, however, as shy of everyone else as it had formerly been.

The herb-gatherer was much astonished at the affection the beautiful white stag had for him. It appeared to him that it wanted his help in some way, and when it looked at him with its large clear eyes it seemed as if it longed to speak but could find no words. For a long time the Stag's affection for the herb-gatherer continued, and it constantly stood before him looking

THE WHITE STAG

at him with pleading eyes. At last he said to his wife: "I feel sure the white stag wants something and would like to tell me; but, alas! it cannot!"

"It is not so very difficult to find out what it wants" replied his wife. "Why not consult the old fisherwoman, she will soon tell you how to find out what the animal has to say?"

The old fisherwoman was not only very wise, but was said to be a witch, and she lived a solitary and lonely life all by herself in a tiny old cottage at a little distance from the hamlet. No one ever came near her old cottage unless they wanted her advice either for mental troubles or bodily ailments. To some she gave charms and amulets, but for others she prepared healing-drinks and medicines. Each received what was best for his trouble or disease. So the herb-gatherer went to this old woman and told her the story of the white stag.

The fisherwoman sat thinking for a long time. Then she raised her grey head and said: "It is a wonderful story about the white stag. My grandmother told me all about it one hundred years ago, but alas! I am so old I cannot remember it all. I know, however, that a count's son was changed into a white stag. Why this happened or how he may be released I fail

FAIRY TALES FROM THE HARZ MOUNTAINS

to remember. But we will soon learn for I will ask my ravens."

She opened the windows of her cottage- one towards the south and one towards the north- murmured a few unknown words, and gave a loud sharp whistle. In a short time there was heard the fluttering of wings and a deep croaking as a pair of old ravens descended and alighted on the window bar.

"Kra! Kra! Krah!" they croaked, "we've come from far!"

Then the old woman raised her voice and said: "Good ravens, you are as old as the oldest forests on the Harz Mountains, and you know all that has happened, and you never forget anything, so tell me, good ravens, all about the white stag."

The ravens shook their wings, nodded their heads, and opening their bills croaked: "Kra! Kra! Krah! we know all, near and far!" and then in a low deep voice one of the ravens continued: "The son of a neighbouring count loved the daughter of the noble knight who lived in the Castle of Treseburg. Every day he came in the hope he might catch a glimpse of the lovely maiden or even exchange a greeting or a few words. One day he came and it so happened that he saw on the mountain side a splendid white stag.

THE WHITE STAG

He was smitten with the enthusiasm of the sportsman, and flinging his spear at the animal it fell dead with the blow. The young count was delighted with his success and he was preparing to remove the dead stag to his father's castle so that it might adorn his armoury



Hunter and the old Fisherwoman

as a pair of antlers was their family crest, when there was a waving of branches, a tumult among the leaves, a parting of the bushes and the Wise Woman of the Forest—who was as old as the rivers and the hills and was more powerful than the gnomes, the elves, the fairies and all the dwellers of the woods, stood before

FAIRY TALES FROM THE HARZ MOUNTAINS

him. She was quite beside herself with anger as the dead stag was her especial favourite and she cursed the young count in wild angry language: "Thou blood-thirsty man!" she cried; "thou shalt never again stalk the deer. Thou shalt hunt no more; in future thou shalt be hunted. Thou shalt be changed into a white stag like the one thou has slain and for hundreds of years thou shalt wander around here," and with these words she changed the young count into a white stag and this is the one that still wanders on the Hagedorn." The raven shook his head three times as a confirmation of his story and then remained still.

The old woman said: "Tell me, good ravens, all you know, and when and how the magic spell can be broken."

Then the other raven raised his head, fluttered his wings and said: "Kra! Kra! Krah! Blood is required, blood can alone break the spell! When a hunter who has never spilt blood gives the white stag blood to eat and drink which has never come from man or animal then is the spell on the white stag ended."

The old woman wanted to ask more questions, but the ravens remained silent, shook their heads, raised their wings and flew away. One flew to the valley

THE WHITE STAG

of the Bodo and the other to his home in the high rocks which is still known as the Raven's Cliff.

When the ravens had disappeared the old woman remained for a long time in deep thought and seemed as if she had quite forgotten the presence of the herb-gatherer.

"That is a dark saying", he remarked after a long silence. The old woman murmured some incoherent words and then said: "Wait a moment; I think I see it all". She rose, turned to the herb-gatherer and asked him who it was that the raven had said should be able to break the magic spell. The herb-gatherer replied: "A hunter who has never spilt blood!"

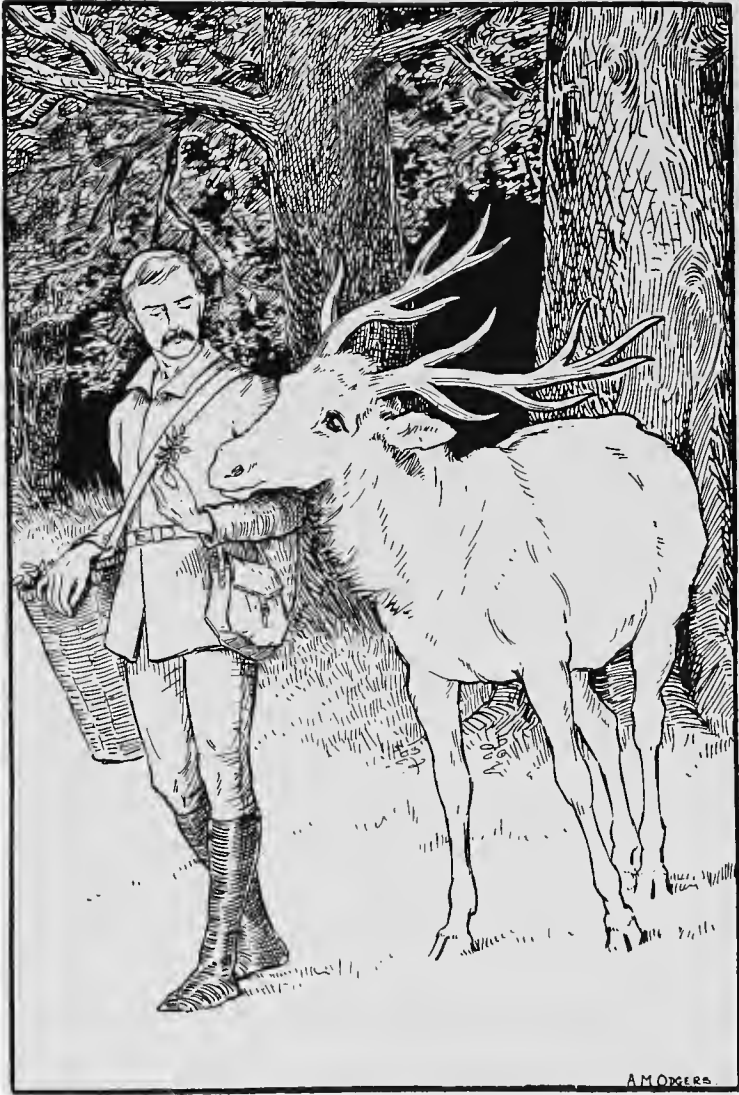
"Where can we find such a man?" asked the old woman.

"No-where, alas!" replied the man thoughtfully.

The old woman looked curiously at the herb-gatherer, and while a smile passed over her old wrinkled face she said to him: "Have you at any time spilt blood?"

"No!" cried the man horrified. "How can you ask such a question?"

"It was with no evil intention," said the old dame curtly. "Now I know it is you alone who can break the spell and set the young count free. Listen to me!



Hunter and the White Stag

THE WHITE STAG

Were not your forefathers huntsmen to the old knights of Treseburg and for that very reason you possess the surname of Hunter. You say, yourself, that you have never spilt blood; so here is the HUNTER who has never caused blood to flow, It is, therefore, as clear as daylight why the Stag is so anxious as it sees in you its deliverer from the power of magic."

Hunter was speechless with astonishment, and he never doubted that the old woman's surmise was the correct solution. "But", he remarked thoughtfully "what about the blood that I am to give the stag to eat and drink."

"That is your business" said the old woman archly. "It must be your special work to discover this. It is not found in men or in animals, you must, therefore, seek it in some tree or plant."

The herb-gatherer sat thinking with his head on his arm. Suddenly his face brightened, he sprang up and clasping the old woman round the neck exclaimed joyfully: "I have it! I have it, it is the St. John's Wort, which the learned called *Hypericum*, for its leaves drop blood on the festival of St. John Baptist. *

* The glands which abound in the genus *Hypericum* (St. John's Wort) contain a deep red juice in the cells. The glands are situated in or below the thin skin which covers the surface of the plant.

FAIRY TALES FROM THE HARZ MOUNTAINS

To morrow is St. John's Day and the little herb with its fair yellow flowers grows abundantly in my garden."

The next morning Hunter went to the mountain with a bundle of St. John's Wort under his arm. The white stag came bounding towards him and eagerly ate from his hand the strong stems, the yellow flowers and the soft green leaves of the St. John's Wort from which drops of blood fell. In a moment the White Stag had vanished and where it had stood eating the St. John's Wort was a tall handsome young man, with bright sparkling eyes and clad in a gold embroidered jerkin and an ostrich feather in his cap. He embraced the herb-gatherer saying: "Receive my warmest thanks and gratitude, brave man. Thou hast released me from a servitude worse than slavery, but when I return home I know well my father will reward handsomely the deliverer of his son. But tell me why the Castle of Treseburg is in ruins when it was but yesterday a powerful fortress. Who has destroyed it and where is the charming daughter of the noble knight who lived there?"

"Alas! Sir" replied the herb-gatherer sadly, "as long as I can remember, or my father, or my grandfather, there has been no castle on yonder height, and no knight and his daughter have lived in it. You will seek in vain for your friends. Do you not know that

THE WHITE STAG

it is many hundred years since the magic spell came upon you?"

"Hundreds of years!" cried the young count wildly; and his eyes opened wide in terror and his cheeks grew pale.

"Yes, hundreds of years," laughed a scornful voice and the Wise Woman of the Forest stood before them. "That is the punishment for thy foolish deed. Now, go and find thy people. Thou wilt discover them in the grave. Go to them and lay thyself beside them, for thou canst now find peace and rest since the spell is loosed. Still, thy punishment is not yet ended for on this day every seventh year thou shalt appear as a white Stag."

She disappeared. The young man shuddered and then he said, sighing deeply: "It must be so, my time for living is long ago past, this age knows me not, my friends are all dead centuries ago and there is nothing for me to seek in life. As our Castle now contains no treasure I can but reward thee with this belt."

He unclasped his belt adorned with golden devices set with precious stones and costly jewels and handed it to the herb-gatherer. Then he went quickly away and was never again seen.

FAIRY TALES FROM THE HARZ MOUNTAINS

The jewelled belt remained in the herb-gatherer's family for many generations until, at last, it fell into the hands of a band of soldiers who plundered the district in a time of war. Although the family does not now possess the precious belt, yet a blessing has ever rested on its clever and industrious members.

THE ELVES AND THE FLOWERS

THE ELVES AND THE FLOWERS

IN a lovely valley near Harzburg was a humble cottage where a poor widow lived with her little daughter.

By constant work and incessant labour the poor woman and her little girl earned a scanty livelihood; but a sad day came to poor little Else when her good mother was struck down by a fever, and was obliged to take to her bed. The neighbours were good and kind, and out of their own scanty supplies they gave the some fragments of food which helped them for a time.

The winter with its cold mantle of white snow and icy winds was passed, and Else hoped that with the warm weather her mother would recover and regain her health. Thousands and thousands of fair green leaves were uncurled, the bright wild-flowers had opened their gay coloured petals to the sunshine, and the birds were joyously singing in the blue heavens. Alas! the

FAIRY TALES FROM THE HARZ MOUNTAINS

good mother still lay on her sick-bed and the heart of her little Else grew, day by day, sadder and heavier.

The last coin was spent on a meagre supper, no



Else and the flowers

more bread was in the house, the poor mother cried out in her pain and suffering, and alas! there seemed as if there was no help for their distress in the great wide world.

THE ELVES AND THE FLOWERS

Else went out into the forest so that her poor mother should not see she was crying, and as she wandered on, her tears fell to the ground thick and fast.

The little girl was very weak, for she was not only hungry and half-starved, but her strength was undermined with long hours of watching beside her mother's sick-bed. So, at last, sad and weary, she sat down on a fallen tree covered over with green lichen and moss.

"Is there nothing that can cure my dear mother" she cried out in her trouble. "Is there nothing that will end our distress and our misery?"

The sunshine glinted through the trees, the flowers stood around her in their thousands and before her was a great mass of rock called the Elfinstone. How often had her grandmother told her of the elves and the fairies, and how they danced and sang around the Elfinstone, and how kind and good they were to poor little girls like herself. So it might be that help was nearer her than she had imagined. Had not her grandmother told her that the beautiful elves and fairies sang and danced in the light of the pale wan moon, but in the daytime they hid themselves in the cups and petals of the flowers. These "little folk" were known to bring joy and happiness to the homes they visited, and they gave to the sick, sap from healing

FAIRY TALES FROM THE HARZ MOUNTAINS

plants which had a marvellous power of curing diseases and fevers.

As Else held up her hand to her aching forehead she thought that she saw all the flowers gently waving to and fro and bowing to her. The sweet wild thyme at her feet nodded to her, the hair-bells rang their fair blue bells, while the orchids, the anemones and all the other flowers gently swayed their slender stems. Else quite clearly and distinctly heard many voices calling to her and they all seemed to say: "Pluck me! pluck me! take us home and then we will help you and your mother!"

She sprang up hurriedly and looked around her. Her heart felt light and free as if some great heavy burden had been removed, and a new hope came to her as she thought of what these "good folk", these "little folk" might do for her.

Louder and still louder the voices in the flowers called to her. For one moment she stood and looked at them, and then she ran from flower to flower and soon her small hands could scarcely hold the large bunch she had gathered.

Else then sat down for a short time before starting on her homeward way, and she rested her curly head on a moss-covered stone. Her eyelids closed over her

THE ELVES AND THE FLOWERS

blue eyes and she fell asleep. When she awoke she tried to rise, but alas! she felt as if her limbs were held down, while in her lap lay the flowers and they still seemed to be nodding and talking to her.

At last she made a great effort to get up. It was growing late and the sun was quite hidden behind the mountains, and twilight filled the forest and she could scarcely see the path that led down to the valley.

Else gathered up the flowers in her apron and ran homewards as fast as her little bare feet would carry her.

Softly she opened the door of her little home and as she entered the room on tip-toe she saw that her mother was fast asleep. All was still and silent, there was no sound, nothing seemed to move.

"Dearest mother?" she whispered sottly, "are you not awake". No answer came. "She sleeps", said the little girl and she smiled so sweetly as she thought that the elves and the fairies were helping her. "Perhaps to-morrow, certainly the day after", she said, "all trouble would be ended and all would be well."

Else silently laid the bunch of wild flowers on her mother's bed so that the "little folk" might be near to help her, and then she sat down at the foot of the bed and looked at the flowers.

Slowly the moon rose and its pale light shone

FAIRY TALES FROM THE HARZ MOUNTAINS

through the window, and then Else saw the petals of the flowers move and out of a fair white anemone came a lovely maiden more beautiful than any one Else had ever seen, and other elves and fairies came out of the flowers and they began to dance and to sing their enchanting songs.

Else's head sank softly on the bed. She closed her eyes and as the elves and the fairies danced lightly over her forehead, the pain fled away and she forgot all her trouble and sorrow in that hour of sweet forgetfulness.

When morning dawned a kind-hearted neighbour came to the hut with some food, and she found the mother and daughter had fallen into that long sleep from which there is no awakening.

The elves and the fairies had given Else the help they had promised.

THE EVERLASTING LAMP AND THE
MAGIC SPINDLE

THE EVERLASTING LAMP AND THE MAGIC SPINDLE

THE great ruler of that underground world where men descend deep shafts and work in mines for iron and nickel, silver and gold, was called by the miners the "Monk of the Mountain" for this giant spirit was clad in a long dark robe and his head was hidden in a monk's cowl. Whenever a calamity was likely to befall the miners, either through some explosion, or, perchance, a fall of rock which might block up a shaft or gallery, the Monk of the Mountain would appear to the brave miners and warn them of their danger. Sometimes he would warn a whole band who were at work together, at others he would come to a lonely miner toiling at his arduous labour in some far distant gallery.

Once upon a time there was a miner in the Klausthal

FAIRY TALES FROM THE HARZ MOUNTAINS

who, unfortunately, from one cause or another had lost the little he had been able to save and was forced to work incessantly in order to support his wife and children and provide them with the necessities of life. His carefulness was so great that he never carried a lantern if he went to his work at night time in order to save the oil, and for the same reason his miner's lamp was supplied with the smallest and cheapest tallow candles his wife could buy.

One night he was thus going to his work without a lantern, when he lost his way in the darkness and could not find the path which led to the mine. Suddenly he saw a light in the distance and thinking it was carried by one of his comrades, he cried out for help.

The bearer of the lantern came to him, and by its light the astonished miner saw it was none other than the Monk of the Mountain. The spirit asked him why he wandered about in the darkness of night without a lamp. So the miner told him the reason of his economy and he also narrated the series of misfortunes and adversities that had befallen him and his wife.

The Monk of the Mountain went with the miner as far as the mine and before leaving he gave him a piece of tallow candle for his miner's lamp and at the

EVERLASTING LAMP AND MAGIC SPINDLE

same time warning him strongly that he must never tell anyone of their meeting or of the gift.

The candle which the Monk of the Mountain had given him possessed the marvellous power of never being consumed by the flame and it burnt everlastingly. Thus the miner had no longer to buy oil or candles and consequently he was able to save quite a good sum of money.

The same night that the Monk of the Mountain met the miner in the darkness he also appeared to the miner's wife in her little cottage. She was busily engaged in spinning when her strange visitor arrived, and presenting her with an enchanted spindle, which never required replenishing with flax, he warned her that she must keep silent about it and never inform anyone who had given it to her.

Poverty no longer troubled the miner's family; and the beautiful yarn which this Knausthal woman span with her magic spindle became famous far and wide. Much of it was sold in Goslar, and the wives and daughters of the rich townsfolk of that grand old city envied the miner's wife her ability and art in spinning for they could not make their own thread so firm and so fine.

This was especially the case with the beautiful daughter

FAIRY TALES FROM THE HARZ MOUNTAINS

of one of the rich merchants who wondered greatly how this Klausthal woman made her yarn. A young town-councillor wooed this fair maiden and she agreed



The Monk of the Mountain

to become his wife as soon as he could discover the secret of the art employed by the miner's wife. The young lover no sooner received this strange commission

EVERLASTING LAMP AND MAGIC SPINDLE

from his lady-love than he set out to the Klausthal to see if he could discover the secret. The miner had gone to his work and his wife was alone.

“If you will tell me quite plainly” said the young man to the woman “that you are indeed a witch, and who it was that gave you this magic spindle then I will not betray you; but if you do not tell me the truth I must do my duty as a town-councillor and deliver you up as a witch to be publicly burnt alive in the market-place.”

The poor woman was greatly alarmed, and believing that only the truth could save her she told the young man that the Monk of the Mountain had given her the enchanted spindle.

Scarcely had she disclosed the secret than there was a fearful tumult and dense smoke in the room, and in great terror and half suffocated they both fled out of the cottage. When the woman again ventured into her room she found that her magic spindle had disappeared; and as the young town-councillor returned to Goslar he was so mercilessly beaten by invisible hands, that he fainted by the road-side and died a few days afterwards.

Alas! the miner did not succeed better in keeping his wonderful lamp than his wife had done in preserving

FAIRY TALES FROM THE HARZ MOUNTAINS

her enchanted spindle. At first his comrades did not like to enquire about his ever-burning lamp, the flame of which was never extinguished, but one of his intimate friends ventured to ask him how it was that he had become possessed of it. For sometime the miner refused to answer his question, but as his friend pressed him to tell him, he at last satisfied his curiosity and told him that he had met the Monk of the Mountain who had given him the valuable present. Scarcely had the words passed his lips than there was a fearful, unearthly noise and to their extreme horror the Monk of the Mountain stood before them in all his solemn majesty. With piercing, scornful eyes he beheld them, and then he gave the miner's gossiping friend such a violent box on his ear that for ever afterwards his head was awry. The miner too received a severe blow, while at the same moment a piece of rock fell on the lamp, and when the two men had recovered from their bewilderment they found that the Monk of the Mountain had vanished and the everlasting lamp was for ever extinguished.

THE THREE GREY MANNIKINS

THE THREE GREY MANNIKINS

Two men once set out from Swabia to the Harz Mountains having heard it was famous for minerals and they intended to mine for the ore which they would smelt into metal. They were good and industrious men and they wandered up and down many valleys in search of a likely spot where they could erect a water wheel, dig a mine, and build their furnace and workshops.

At last they came on a place in the Valley of the Bodo not far from Treseburg, which seemed suitable in all respects. Here they prepared to open up the ground, erect their buildings and dig a trench to carry the water from the river to their new workings.

When the buildings were completed, the mine opened out, and the trench dug, a grey mannikin passed by, and he nodded pleasantly to the two strangers and asked them what they were erecting.

FAIRY TALES FROM THE HARZ MOUNTAINS

The Swabians told him that they had come from far, that they intended to settle there and through labour and industry establish a mineral work, which might not only support them but be a means of livelihood for their children's children.

The grey mannikin shook his head thoughtfully and looking sadly at the two foreigners he passed on without saying a word. Scarcely had he disappeared than another grey mannikin passed by on the other side of the river, and he, too, greeted the Swabians and asked what they were building.

On receiving the same answer he, also, shook his head and silently went on his way.

Then a third grey mannikin appeared on the bank of the river having descended by a mountain path. He greeted the strangers and asked the same question. On receiving his answer he, too, shook his head and was about to go away when the Swabians ran up to him, being a little annoyed and vexed. "You are the third Mannikin", they said, "who has asked about our work, but has gone away shaking his head. Tell us the meaning of all this, for a shake of the head is a poor substitute for good advice."

"What is the use of good advice", said the Mannikin sadly, "if it is not followed?"

THE THREE GREY MANNIKINS

“Pray give us some?” replied the strangers, “very likely we shall be able to follow it.”

The Mannikin shook his head, but after a while he said: “If you are indeed, seeking to found a business for your children’s children, then dig your mine and build your workshops elsewhere, for here it will all be washed away within a year.”

At this the two Swabians laughed and said:—“If that is all. you can go on your way contented, for are not our buildings placed high upon the bank of the river, and this little streamlet can never reach them?”

“It is just as I said”, remarked the Mannikin, “what is the good of giving good advice if it is not followed?” and he went away sorrowfully.

The work went forward, the buildings were erected and the sound of hammers striking anvils sounded in the quiet valley and was echoed by the lofty mountains.

Winter came, and then the Spring: but, alas! the Spring was no time of joy and gladness to the two Swabian strangers.

The ice on the surface of the river began to crack; the deep snow on the slopes of the Brocken melted and poured such vast floods of water into the narrow valley that the river rose rapidly. The great blocks of ice formed a dam in the narrow gorge and in a

FAIRY TALES FROM THE HARZ MOUNTAINS

short time the plains beyond became flooded with a sea of moving water. The rushing, raging, angry waters rose higher and higher, and tall fir trees were carried along like twigs on its heaving bosom.

At last the water touched the basement of the new buildings, then it pressed against the doors and windows, and after flinging angry waves and huge blocks of ice against the wooden walls, it swept all away just as the sea destroys a sand castle built on the shore.

The two Swabians had only time to save their lives by hurriedly climbing the mountain side, and then looking back they beheld their handiwork, the labour of many months, carried away and lost in the sea of waters. Windows, doors, props, wooden benches, and tables were all swept away in the flood; and even the heavy iron anvil was hurled into the bed of the stream where it still lies hidden under the waters of the swift-flowing Bodo.

In time the water subsided and the stream flowed as usual in its narrow bed. The two Swabians stood on the site of their former buildings and wringing their hands exclaimed sadly:—"O! that we had followed the good advice of the grey mannikin then all would have been well with us!"

The words had scarcely escaped their lips when a

THE THREE GREY MANNIKINS

grey mannikin came up the valley, and greeting the two men said:—"You must not lose courage, good people, or else everything is indeed lost. I will help you to select a better place for your new undertakings which will never be destroyed by a flood."

This he did and with renewed energy the two strangers began to cut down the trees, dig their mine, erect new buildings and thus endeavour to repair their former loss by incessant labour and increased industry.

It was, indeed, wonderful how all their efforts seemed to succeed, and now their former misfortunes were only a memory of the past—however, it was even more wonderful that unknown powers appeared to aid their work and labours.

When the workshop was closed on festivals and Sundays, the Swabians heard the sound of incessant hammering, the blowing of bellows and the hum of work: and the next day they found all their unfinished labours were completed. So they wondered greatly who it was that helped them in this marvellous way.

However carefully they watched they never saw anyone enter or leave the building. So they made a small hole through the door, and the next time they heard the hammering, the blowing of the bellows at

FAIRY TALES FROM THE HARZ MOUNTAINS

the forge and the steady hum of laborious work they looked into the workshop through their spy-hole.

Imagine their astonishment when they beheld the three grey mannikins blowing the bellows, smelting the ore, and busy with other operations which would



The mannikin and the two Swabians

have taken the two strangers many days of labour to finish.

A higher power and a kindly enchantment had overruled all their work and for the unbounded success they had attained in so short a time they had to thank the friendly efforts of the three grey mannikins.

THE THREE GREY MANNIKINS

For a long period of time this help remained with them, and their treasure and riches increased daily.

Their hearts were full of thankfulness, and they sought some means whereby they could show their gratitude to their kind benefactors. At last one of them said:—"I know what we will do. The three mannikins look so dusty, their clothes are so old-fashioned, and their coats are shiny and threadbare. Now, we have accumulated a large sum of money so let us expend a little on new and fine clothing for our good friends.

So three fine suits were ordered such as were fit for noblemen to wear having scarlet breeches, tunics of soft velvet adorned with silver lace and sleeves slashed with yellow silk, short mantles fastened with golden chains, and velvet caps with white plumes.

These suits were hung on the three anvils at which the three grey mannikins worked, and near each anvil they placed a pair of long-pointed leather shoes adorned with gold.

The two men looked in turn through the spy-hole and anxiously awaited the arrival of the three grey mannikins, feeling quite sure that they would not only be charmed with the fine clothes but would be still more pleased, that their two protégés showed a true feeling of gratitude.

FAIRY TALES FROM THE HARZ MOUNTAINS

Soon the three grey mannikins entered the room, and they blew up the fire and went to the anvils. Suddenly they stood still, and they looked alarmed as they gazed mournfully at the gifts intended for their acceptance. They moved away from the presents and there was no expression of joy or gladness in their faces; they seemed full of sorrow and looked with sadness upon the clothes and especially upon the smart leather shoes with the pointed toes. They wrung their hands in despair, extinguished the fire, and in the darkness, that followed, the three grey mannikins disappeared and returned no more.

THE INSECT MESSENGER

THE INSECT MESSENGER

ONCE upon a time a Count, who lived in Saxony, set forth on a warlike expedition against the heathen hordes of Pomerania. He left his only daughter in one of his fortresses in the Valley of the Bodo under the care of an old steward and a few infirm soldiers, who could not accompany him to the distant war.

As soon as the Count had departed his many enemies called their retainers together saying;—"Now let us be revenged on the Count, for he has gone far away and can do us no harm; let us beseige his castle, level it to the ground and carry away his only daughter." Many times they tried to take the stronghold by storm—but the gates were firm, the moat deep and wide, the towers and walls high and strong, and the defenders fought with the courage of lions.

These soldiers had all grown old in the service of

FAIRY TALES FROM THE HARZ MOUNTAINS

the Count and they would sooner die at their posts than let his enemies take the castle and carry away his daughter.

The Steward of the Castle knew too well that if help did not come he would be obliged to surrender; so a messenger was dispatched to inform the Count of the peril surrounding his daughter. But, alas! he fell into the hands of the enemy. They slew him, cut off his head and then threw it over the castle wall and it fell into the courtyard. Other messengers undertook the hazardous journey, but a similar fate befell them, for the castle was surrounded by a ring of glittering lances and shining shields.

The distress of the defenders increased daily and the chance of help seemed remote. They would have lost heart and courage had not the fair maiden encouraged them to deeds of daring. Strength was given them in a wonderful way to continue the unequal struggle, for the old soldiers determined to sell their lives dearly sooner than let the daughter of their brave master fall into the hands of his foes.

The young Countess flitted about the castle saying a comforting word to one, and giving a bright smile to another; and even the old Steward felt hopeful, although he wondered where help could come from;

THE INSECT MESSENGER

he knew the Count did not intend to return until the winter when the campaign in Pomerania would be ended. No message could be sent to him, and most of his friends had accompanied him to the war, and others who had remained had not heard that his castle was besieged by robber knights, for they had set about their evil work so quietly.

The Count's daughter knew well how great was the danger ; in the presence of the Steward and his soldiers she appeared light-hearted and joyous, but when she was alone many were the bitter tears she shed.

One evening she was on the battlements of the castle and she looked sadly down on the tents of the besiegers ; then her eyes wandered over the hills and she thought of her dear father and she was overwhelmed by her grief and danger.

It was Spring-time and towards eventide ; a fresh breeze blew from the mountains, the sunset glow illumined the clouds and turned them into crimson, and the maiden still stood on the battlement and wondered when her father would return to his child and save her from the robber knights. She told her trouble to the gentle breeze and to the crimson clouds ; but the breeze only hurried away to kiss the flowers and whisper to the leaves and he forgot to carry her mes-



The Countess on the Battlements

sage to the Count, and the crimson clouds faded into darkness and were lost in the shadows of night.

Then the golden stars spangled the heavens and a great stillness came over the land. No sound of clashing arms disturbed the camp below, and, save for the silent sentinals, the weary defenders slumbered peacefully. Still the maiden wept on the battlement and she strained her ears to catch the sound of galloping steeds in the far away distance; but no other sound could be heard than the sighing of the night-wind in the trees and the hum of innumerable insects. This

THE INSECT MESSENGER

peaceful hour was, in truth, the borderland of dreams and reality, and a magic influence seemed to breathe over all. The very trees whispered one to another, the flowers rang their tiny bells, the nightingale's clear notes came from the forest full of sweet words and the song sung by the night-wind contained more beautiful thoughts than anyone had ever dreamed of before.

Suddenly the maiden heard a voice close beside her.

It came from a cockchafer which buzzed in a monotonous tone:—

“O! weep no more, fair maiden
Your message I will see
Is carried to your father
Wherever he may be.”

She ceased weeping, joy came into her heart and she said to the cockchafer:—

“In distant lands my father roams
Fighting many foes:
Little reeks he that his child
Weeps o'er many woes.
Go, tell him that the robber knights
Storm his castle wall
And if he does not fast return
It must in ruins fall.”

One evening the Count lay in his tent after a day of severe fighting, and he thought of his distant castle

FAIRY TALES FROM THE HARZ MOUNTAINS

in the Harz Mountains and his dear daughter, when a cockchafer suddenly flew round his couch and in its droning hum he distinctly heard the words:—

“Go home, brave knight! go home, brave knight!
Thy daughter stands in direst plight
And soon thy castle falls;
The robber knights beseege it sore
And soon will break its entrance door
And burn its stately halls.”

The Count sprang up, struck his great shield so that the sound awakened all his men, and then with drums beating, trumpets sounding, and banners fluttering in the breeze, the troops set forth on their homeward march to the Harz Mountains.

When the armed cavalcade reached the Valley of the Bodo they separated into various bands which silently climbed the mountains; and just when the robber knights were storming the castle the Count's men rapidly descended the hills on every side of the Valley and fell upon them like angry tigers. The power of the enemy was broken and those who escaped this fierce onslaught, fled towards the fortress of Erichsburg seeking safety within its massive walls. The Count called the whole district to arms against the robber knights, and with help from the towns of Mühlhausen and Nordhausen

THE INSECT MESSENGER

he stormed and took their castle making all the defenders prisoners. The two robber knights—Count Hermann of Stalberg and Henry of Werthern—were executed and the others degraded and severely punished.

THE KING OF THE MANNIKINS

THE KING OF THE MANNIKINS

IN one of the lovely wooded valleys of the Hartz Mountains is a great rock known as the Heubigstein. Long, long ago, King Heubig, the dwarf king of the Gnomes, ruled here, and he allowed no one except his own small subjects to climb up the cliff or to enter his wonderful underground palace. Should any bold adventurer dare to climb the Heubigstein he was held fast by enchantment and died from exposure, hunger, and thirst.

A wood-ranger with his son who was known, in all the countryside, to be a brave fearless youth, lived in the valley not far from the foot of the famous Heubigstein. One day some of the young man's friends dared him to climb the enchanted rock; and, in spite of the dreadful stories which were told of King Heubig, he accepted the wager and before his father could prevent him he had set out on his foolhardy adventure.

FAIRY TALES FROM THE HARZ MOUNTAINS

His comrades saw him climb to the top of the great rock and joyfully wave his greetings to them as they stood in the valley below. After succeeding so well in his daring deed he was about to descend the cliff when he suddenly felt faint and giddy and his feet refused to move a step forward. It seemed to him that his feet were rooted to the very rock upon which he stood, and although he exerted his utmost strength he could not move a single inch. So there he stood, like a living statue, on the summit of the enchanted Heubigstein.

His comrades in the valley below saw what had happened, and full of anxiety for their friend they hastened to tell his father of the fearful calamity that had befallen his unfortunate son. The old man was greatly alarmed and hastened to the foot of the Heubigstein to see for himself if his son were really in the terrible plight which his friends had depicted. However, he soon found it was only too true, and he saw clearly enough that the daring young climber must forfeit his life and die a painful lingering death from exposure and hunger.

The youth called to his father and begged him to bring his cross-bow and end his misery by a well-directed arrow. The poor father's heart was filled with

THE KING OF THE MANNIKINS

pity for his boy and he hastened home to fetch the weapon. The terrible thought of killing his only son filled him with an agony of despair and horror; but he saw no other way of saving his poor boy from the misery and pain of a lingering death which King Heubig had prepared for him.

The wood-ranger took up his cross-bow and as he returned towards the foot of the Heubigstein he met a little mannikin whose face was wrinkled and ugly and whose long white beard reached down to his waist-band. The anxious father of the unhappy boy greeted the little gnome and desired to hurry on his way; but the small man detained him and asked after his health and his family in so kindly a manner that the wood-ranger confided to him the great trouble that had befallen him on account of the temerity of his son.

When the unhappy wood-ranger came in sight of the statue-like figure on the top of the Heubigstein, the dwarf suddenly left him. Night clouds were descending and the wood-ranger made up his mind that if the terrible deed must be done there was no time to tarry as darkness would soon shroud the enchanted rock. So he prepared to draw his cross-bow and end the misery of his son by a well-directed arrow. But before he could draw his bow there was a mighty



King Heubig and his Captive

rustling and moving all around him, and from behind the pine trees and the bushes came forth hundreds and hundreds of little mannikins, and among them was the one he had met on his way from his home. This little dwarf now carried a miner's lamp in one hand, while he vigorously encouraged his comrades to fling fir cones and branches from the thorn trees at the wood-ranger. The conflict did not last long for the man was obliged to give way and seek refuge from the army of angry gnomes.

As soon as the wood-ranger had gone the small men began climbing the rock, but the little mannikin with the silver lamp

THE KING OF THE MANNIKINS

was evidently their leader and he bravely climbed ahead of the others. His grey hood had fallen back on his shoulders with the exertion of ascending the cliff and it could now be seen that his head was adorned with a golden crown.

The king and his followers made their way to the top of the rock where the wood-ranger's son still stood unable to move. King Heubig spoke sternly to him about his foolish adventure.

“Without my permission, young man, you have climbed my rock and placed yourself on the highest point of my kingdom”, he said solemnly. “You deserve nothing better than to be thrown over this precipice. But for your father's sake whose only joy and comfort you are in his old age, I will forgive and save you”.

Thus speaking the King beckoned to one of his mannikins who took hold of the trembling youth and carried him down the cliff into a deep gorge which led to the entrance of King Heubig's underground kingdom.

At a sign from the Dwarf-king a number of lovely elf-children brought food and drink to the young man, and as he refreshed himself his eyes wandered over the splendours of this wonderful palace. The floors and the ceilings were composed of great crystals, the

FAIRY TALES FROM THE HARZ MOUNTAINS

walls were of pure gold and precious stones, while the furniture and utensils were all made of silver.

King Heubig showed his guest all the marvels of his underground kingdom, and then took him into his Treasure-house where he saw great coppers and chests all full of countless numbers of golden coins.

“All this precious metal”, said the King, has been obtained by the incessant and willing labour of my many subjects, and sometimes I use it in the service of your people for I have always a kindly feeling for them. Have you not heard how, quite recently, I filled the basket of a poor woman with golden fir-cones and healing plants because she was in dire distress at her husband’s illness. I can never permit, my friend, any foolish inroads into my kingdom for they disturb my peace and quiet. So if you are truly thankful for being saved you must do me this kindness, and never permit anyone to shoot at the falcon and fieldfare on the Heubigstein, for in doing so they often miss the birds and hit the rock. Should the highest point of the Heubigstein by any accident be demolished then I am banished for ever to my underground halls and may never reign above ground again.

The son of the wood-ranger promised to carry out the wishes of the dwarf-king, and then King Heubig told

THE KING OF THE MANNIKINS

him he might fill his pockets with as many gold pieces as they would contain.

The kindly monarch saw that his guest was weary and he ordered a bed of moss and leaves to be prepared for him, and in a few moments the youth was fast asleep.

When he awoke he saw that the golden sun was high in the heavens and that he lay at the foot of the Heubigstein. For a moment he thought that all his strange experiences were but a dream, until he found in his pockets the gold pieces given to him by King Heubig and so it was clear he had visited the underground Palace of the King of the Mannikins.

With rapid steps he hastened home to his father who embraced his lost son with tears of joy and thankfulness.

The young man kept his promise to the dwarf-king very faithfully, and he and his children and his children's children never permitted any hunter to shoot in the direction of the Heubigstein so that no fragment of stone fell from the summit of the enchanted rock.

Years later came the terrible Thirty Years War, and during the tumult of that fearful time some of the stones on the top of the Heubigstein were hurled down, and since that day the King of the Mannikins has never been seen again.

PRINCESS ILSE

PRINCESS ILSE

HIGH above King Ilse's castle towered the great rugged peak of the Ilsestein, while in the Valley below the mountain torrent rushed down from the Brocken at headlong speed half hidden by beech and pine. The castle was a vast building of granite and it contained many treasures; but its greatest treasure was the King's only daughter—the Princess Ilse whose wonderful beauty was talked of in every land.

There lived in the valley a wicked old witch who had also an only daughter called Trute; but alas! she was as ugly in features and spiteful in disposition as Ilse was sweet and beautiful.

One day a brave young knight rode through the valley seeking adventures; and no sooner had the red-haired Trute seen him than she fell in love with this good-humoured bright young Rolf. She knew she

FAIRY TALES FROM THE HARZ MOUNTAINS

could not win his affection so she begged her mother to detain him by some cunning spell.

The artful old witch willingly promised to help her daughter and she at once set to work to prepare a magic potion. The young knight drank the potion



Trute the knight and the witch

and suddenly he beheld in Trute the most lovely of maidens and he fell deeply in love with her.

In a short time the potion lost its power and then young Rolf exerted his will and fled away from the ugly Trute and the enchanted spells of her wicked old mother. He left the valley below him and ascended

PRINCESS ILSE

the road which led to King Ilsung's castle, and as he came to an open space near the fortress he met the beautiful Princess Ilse. When Rolf beheld the lovely face and the long golden hair of this fair Princess, he knew that no evil witch with her spells and enchantments could prevent him from paying his homage to the most charming lady he had ever seen.

Many happy days were spent in King Ilsung's splendid castle, and as Rolf and Ilse wandered, hand in hand, through the green woods clothed in their fresh spring verdure, there sprang up in these two young hearts a beautiful noble love for each other. Good King Ilsung was delighted to see their happiness and permitted their betrothal. However, before the wedding could take place a cloud gathered over them.

Trute and her mother heard of the betrothal and full of anger and hatred the cruel witch determined to seek a terrible revenge. She made a contract with those powers of evil which have their home on the Blocksberg, and they promised that on the Eve of St. Walpurgis' Day, a great flood of water should descend from the Brocken and every one should be destroyed in the Ilsenstein valley.

With a mighty rush and a roar like thunder the vast flood of rushing water came down the valley. It

FAIRY TALES FROM THE HARZ MOUNTAINS

swept away all the wooden bridges and the cottages and it rose above the highest pine-trees which grew on the banks of the stream. Higher and still higher rose the waters and at last King Ilsung's stately castle with its high walls and proud towers was swept away by the flood. Ilsung and Rolf were both drowned, and only the trembling Princess saved herself by climbing to the highest point of the Ilsenstein.

On a calm clear night when the moon-light falls on the Ilsenstein valley the lovely daughter of King Ilsung wanders beside the mountain torrent, which now bears her name, seeking some placid pool where she can bathe in the light of the pale wan moon. But when the first blush of dawn reddens the Ilsenstein she vanishes to King Ilsung's castle hidden for ever beneath the clear crystal waters of the lovely stream.

Few have ever seen this wonderful castle, but now and again the Princess Ilse during her nightly wanderings meets some youth who is so good and true that the beautiful maiden shows him the way to the castle halls. But, alas! for those who are *too* curious and try to find the wonderful home of the fair Princess for themselves. They are transformed into old fir trees like those that still stand at the foot of the Ilsenstein.

PRINCESS ILSE AND THE CHARCOAL-BURNER

PRINCESS ILSE AND THE CHARCOAL-BURNER

LATE one night a charcoal-burner trudged up the Ilsenstein valley so that he might reach his distant charcoal-kiln at break of day. The poor man had a large family to provide for and it was needful for him to work early and late so that they might have their daily bread. With rapid steps he pressed forward without looking to the right or the left.

At a turn in the road he suddenly saw the well-known figure of the beautiful Princess Ilse as she emerged from a clump of pine-trees. She greeted him kindly and told the astonished charcoal-burner to follow her to the foot of the Ilsenstein. Here the man saw a cave which no-one had ever noticed before and from out it streamed forth a flood of golden light. Sweetly the Princess begged the loan of the charcoal-burner's

FAIRY TALES FROM THE HARZ MOUNTAINS

knapsack for a few moments so that she might place a little remembrance within it.

Willingly the charcoal-burner gave it up to her and



The Charcoal-burner and Princess Ilse

she took it with her into the cave. In a short time the Princess returned and gave him back his well-filled wallet and at the same time warned him that on no consideration must he open it until he had reached his charcoal-kiln.

PRINCESS ILSE AND THE CHARCOAL-BURNER

The poor charcoal-burner was most anxious to know what the Princess had given him. At first he resisted the temptation to look into his knapsack, but when he had gone a little further and daylight was breaking his intense curiosity overcame him and he opened the wallet.

He did not find his bag full of gold, or silver, or precious stones, but only full of common fir-cones such as he could pick up in the forest by the thousand. Feeling very angry and cross he shook them all out of his knapsack. "Surely" he said to himself, "the Princess out of all her vast treasures might have given me something better than fir-cones". He had hoped for some valuable gift and now he felt very disappointed and a little deceived. When he came to his charcoal-kiln he again looked in his knapsack and saw that one fir-cone had stuck fast in a corner and so had not been thrown away. But his surprise was indeed great when he found that the fir-cone had been changed into pure gold.

He set off at once for the fir-cones he had flung away, but in spite of all his efforts he never found them again and he had to be content with the one golden fir-cone when he might have had a knapsack full of them.

The charcoal-burner's curiosity was for ever cured.

THE THREE MAGIC WISHES

THE THREE MAGIC WISHES

ABOVE one of the many windings of the river Bodo is a high cliff and the water races past its foot as it has done for thousands of years. Moss and fern and lichen cling to its sides, while on the summit are the ruins of a knightly home of whose history there is no record left, save only the name of Treseburg.

On the other side of the river was a humble cottage standing a little away from the cluster of houses, which calls itself a village and has appropriated the name of the old Castle of Treseburg. The owner of this little dwelling was a poor fisherman who earned a scanty livelihood for himself and his family by means of constant and laborious work. The spotted trout did not fetch high prices in those days as they do now when the famous valley of the River Bodo is visited by countless numbers of strangers. He grumbled over

FAIRY TALES FROM THE HARZ MOUNTAINS

his hard lot; and even his little cottage did not please him, although, to-day, many would envy its romantic situation with the river ever murmuring before it and its fine view of the great cliff crowned with the ruined castle of Treseburg and rising majestically from out the rippling stream. Foolish and high-flown thoughts passed through his mind for he was ever thinking of an old tradition which said that his ancestors were descended from the noble family who, once upon a time, lived in the ancient Castle of Treseburg.

He complained that he had to live in a tiny cottage while his castle was in ruins. He loved to picture the ancient fortress as it might have been in the far away past with the white walls overhanging the wooded valley, the round towers, the strong keep, the high turrets, and the battlements guarded by armed warriors clad in coats of mail, with cross-bow, sword and glittering lance.

The fisherman sat for hours looking up at the ruined walls of his ancestor's ancient home, and dreaming of the past that is now for ever departed. One St. John's Day he sat thus on the bank of the stream in front of his cottage, when he saw a Little Grey Man on the other side of the River Bodo. There had been a thunderstorm and the stream was swollen, and as there

THE THREE MAGIC WISHES

was then no bridge, the Little Grey Man appeared anxious and perplexed how to cross the water. So the fisherman shouted to him that he would cross the river and carry him over. This he did and having waded through the turbulent flood he brought the Little Grey Man to the side he desired to reach.

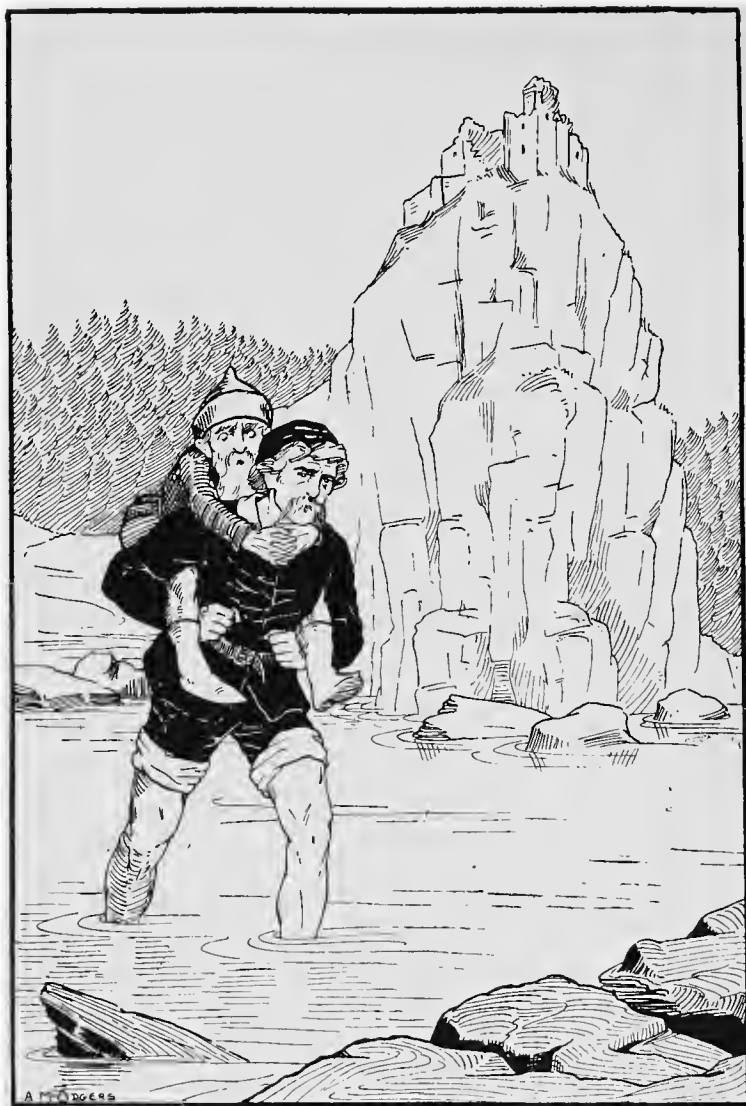
The Little Grey Man was greatly delighted, thanked the fisherman warmly and said: "You are an excellent fellow. You have helped me in carrying out my desire, and for my part I will help you to fulfil one or two of your wishes, if, perchance, you should happen to have any."

"Ah!" replied the fisherman, "everyone has his desires; but the fact is, I have only one that is unfulfilled."

"Only one!" said the little Grey Man, "I should have thought you would at least have had two or three. At any rate, what is your wish?"

"My intense desire", answered the fisherman, "is to be transported back for five hundred years when yonder ruin of Treseburg was a stately castle."

"Well!" said the Little Grey Man, "that is an easy matter," and he told the fisherman to close his eyes for a moment. He did this and when he opened them again, he beheld his castle no longer in ruins, but



The Fisherman and the Little Grey Man

THE THREE MAGIC WISHES

standing in all its pride and splendour as he had so often seen it in his day-dreams. There it stood in stern reality with the white walls overhanging the valley, the great round towers, the strong keep, the steep roofs and the proud battlements where the man-at-arms stood while the bright sunshine fell on glittering lance and spear, sword and battle-axe.

The fisherman's eyes rested on this most wonderful sight and his astonishment was so profound, that he could not look away from it until the Little Grey Man interrupted him with the question: "Your wish is now fulfilled; are you satisfied?"

The fisherman waited a moment before he replied, for the men on the battlement were rudely addressing him, and threatening to kill him if he did not instantly bring up his basket of fish to the castle-gate. One of them, in fact, emphasized his remarks by taking up his cross-bow and shooting two or three pointed arrows in the fisherman's direction and one of them actually hit the trunk of a tree close to him.

"Yes", replied the fisherman to the question addressed to him by the Little Grey Man, "the fulfilment of my wish is indeed, delightful, and the Treseburg is a splendid castle; but it would give me immense joy to see how my ancestors ruled and to take the place of

FAIRY TALES FROM THE HARZ MOUNTAINS

my forefathers who lived and governed the Castle five hundred years ago.

“Well!” said the Little Grey Man smiling, “this too, can easily be done”, and he told the fisherman again to close his eyes.

When he opened them he found he was in a large hall; armour and weapons adorned the walls, while on an oak table also lay many weapons, but some were broken and some were covered with fresh blood stains. Through the open windows came a deafening sound, loud calls, sharp cries of pain and rage and anger, and the incessant clash of sword and battle-axe.

The fisherman, himself, was clad in a complete coat of steel armour. He lay on a bench but his arm gave him intense pain and when he looked at it he saw a large wound many inches long. It had, doubtless, been made by a sword stroke and the warm red blood was still flowing fast from it and making a pool among the rushes which covered the floor of the hall. A great fear fell on him and he cried out loudly for help.

At that moment a door opened and an old servant entered saying:—“Forgive me, Sir Knight, leaving you but I have been preparing an ointment for your wound so that you may again return to the walls and defend your castle against your foes. The danger is, indeed,

THE THREE MAGIC WISHES

great. Hear! Sir Knight. The enemy is again storming the fortress, and alas! our men are weak from hunger and thirst and can scarcely stand erect. I have carried out your command, Sir Knight, and in case of misfortune the treasure is buried in a safe place. It is deposited in the little stone vault which lies under the ground at a spot which is exactly three times seven paces from the entrance gate and three times seven paces from the western tower. Oh! hear, Sir Knight, the door gives way, the enemy is within the castle. We are lost."

The transformed Fisherman felt weak from loss of blood, his head was giddy, and before he could think clearly what should be done, turbulent and angry voices were heard nearing the hall. Heavy blows struck the door and for a moment it seemed as if the good oaken panels might resist the attack when suddenly they fell inwards with a loud crash, and with a wild cry of triumph a crowd of bloodthirsty men rushed upon him.

"We have got thee at last, thou wicked man", they cried, "Thou, who hast robbed and murdered at thy pleasure, art now our prisoner. The hour of vengeance has come. Thou shalt have one hour to pray for thy many sins in thy darkest dungeon wherein so many of thy victims have died of starvation, and then we

FAIRY TALES FROM THE HARZ MOUNTAINS

will hang thee from thy own castle wall as a punishment and a warning to evil-doers."

Strong fists hit him violently, and willing hands gladly flung him into the deepest and darkest dungeon of Treseburg Castle.

The Fisherman lay on the damp straw which covered the floor of the cold dark dungeon. He now fully grasped the misfortune which his own foolish wish had brought upon him, and he thought his last hour had come through the godless magic of the Little Grey Man. Alas! his good wife and his three happy boys would never know what had become of him or how he had ended his days.

"Oh!" he cried in anguish and pain. "Little Grey Man, why hast thou brought this evil upon me? As my second wish has given me into the hands of a cruel band of ruffians and brought me nigh unto death, so I pray thee to grant me a third wish, and this is the last I shall crave. Let me, I implore thee, return to my wife and my sons!" and hot burning tears filled his eyes.

When he had dried the tears and opened his eyes, he breathed freely for he lay on the bank of the river near his nets which were now full of fish, while on the cliff on the other side of the stream there was no

THE THREE MAGIC WISHES

longer a stately castle and its defenders—but only the crumbling ruin of wall and tower, and keep, which he had known since childhood.

The Little Grey Man still stood near him and as he pressed his hand he said to the Fisherman: “Are you now contented, or have you any other wish?”

“No! No!” cried the Fisherman resolutely, “I have only one wish and that is to remain a humble fisherman all the days of my life and to live quietly in my little cottage with my wife and my boys.”

The Little Grey Man went away laughing and the Fisherman dreamed no more of the ancient castle, and the noble family who owned it, but he daily laid his nets and drew in his harvest of fish, happy in his humble state of life and content with his few possessions.

Many years had passed and the Fisherman had never told any one the history of the Little Grey Man and the three magic wishes except his wife and the good Pastor of Wienrode. He was now an old man and his three sons were grown up and he thought it best to tell them the story so that they, in their turn, might repeat it to their children. His sons smiled at the wonderful tale and thought their father was relating a



The hidden Treasure

dream, or, at any rate, some vision of the past that had taken possession of his mind and imagination.

One of the sons, however, considered that, perhaps after all, there might be something in the remarkable story and he pondered over the details day and night. One summer evening when he had finished his work he climbed the cliff where the castle had stood. Here he spent many hours examining the remains of the walls, and tearing up the weeds and brushwood which hid the masonry. At last he appeared to find that which he sought so diligently.

One bright moonlight

THE THREE MAGIC WISHES

night he returned to the ruin with pickaxe, spade and shovel. He found the place where the entrance gate had stood, and he traced the foundations of the western tower and he took seven times three steps from the one and seven times three steps from the other and at that spot he dug with his spade and he actually came upon the roof of a strong vaulted chamber.

The next day some villagers from Treseburg came to the old ruin to gather brushwood when they found that the earth had been recently removed in one place, disclosing a small stone vault. It had been broken open and plundered, for the contents of a decayed chest had been removed. On the loose earth were found several ancient gold and silver coins, as if the discoverer of this hidden treasure had dropped them when he removed the valuable contents of the old box.

The fisherman's son handed over his share in the nets and the fishing to his brothers, left his father's home, and bought a fine estate in the neighbourhood with mines and smelting works which he worked well and successfully, and for many a generation were handed down as valuable possessions to his descendants.

ST. WALPURGIS EVE

ST. WALPURGIS EVE

WINTER lingers on the highest mountains of the Harz, and long are they covered with the glittering snow, while ghostly mists still hover over them and silence reigns around. The pines sighed under their heavy burden of snow. "Will the Spring never come?" they cried. "Will the sky be always clothed in sad-coloured garments and never again deck herself in her light blue robe?"

Sometimes at midday a ray of sunshine made its way through a bank of grey clouds. It was, however, only for a moment for the snowflakes fell again and hid it from view.

The mountain was still wrapt in its mantle of snow when the little moss which clung to the root of the old pine-tree called in its soft tender voice begging the giant tree to look out from its topmost branch and

FAIRY TALES FROM THE HARZ MOUNTAINS

tell her if Spring was coming, for his good friends—the wild flowers—wanted to know if it were time for them to prepare their holiday-robcs.

The old pine-tree willingly obliged those dear little plants which kept themselves warm under his great knotted roots. He shook the snow from off the top-most pine-needles, raised his tall form, and looked out towards the great wide plain below.

“Far away at the foot of the mountains I see fair green fields where there is no snow”, said the old tree to his little friends. “In the far away plain the plants are all beginning to shoot forth and grow, and it is only our high mountain that is still held in the clutch of the cruel winter. Wait a little, just a little longer and Spring will also be here. Firstly, however, that wild army of witches and evil spirits must pass over us. To-night is St. Walpurgis Eve, and I have ever noticed that these evil beings are the heralds of Spring. So, rejoice, my little friends, for to-morrow will end the long cold winter.”

The moss and the sweet wild flowers all trembled in their quiet home under the snow near to the roots of the pine-tree as they heard of the evil spirits which haunted the Brocken on St. Walpurgis Eve.

“Fear nothing!” said the great pine-tree consolingly.

ST. WALPURGIS EVE

“My branches will protect you from this wild, mad, crowd of evil things, which for many and many a year have passed over my head and never done me any harm.”

Thus the pine-tree spoke re-assuringly to the moss and the flowers as the night slowly descended and darkness, like a veil, covered mountains and valleys.

Suddenly a great storm arose. At first it groaned and rumbled in the far away distance, but as it grew nearer the thunder crashed and the lightening shot forth and flashed like flaming swords in the sky; and with a wild roar and a furious rush the wild wind passed through the branches of the pine-tree swaying them to and fro and even cracking some of them. Then came unearthly noises, wild cries, savage laughter and hideous shrieks as the terrible host of evil things drew near.

Some were dancing with waving hair and wide extended arms, while others with grinning mouths and strange distorted features were mounted on broomsticks and three-pronged forks. All these witches and spirits of darkness and evil came on in a wild mad dance at a furious gallop. They came from the witches' dancing ground, from the witches' altar stone, and from the witches' spring which gives unsatisfied desires to all who drink its enchanted water.

On the summit of the Blocksberg all was ready

FAIRY TALES FROM THE HARZ MOUNTAINS



The haunted Brocken

for their reception and the great mountain giant was there to welcome his strange wild guests.

All around the Brocken, men, animals, and even the plants trembled in fear as they heard these howlings and shrieks, screams and cries, and strange weird sounds from those loathsome things which rode, and danced and circled round the topmost summit of that famous mountain.

At length came the dawn and at the sound of the first cock-crow from the village in the valley the witches and evil spirits all vanished and not a trace of their nightly festival remained.

ST. WALPURGIS EVE

As the first rays of the sun kissed the top of the Brocken a soft breath of the South wind swept through the pine-trees, and everywhere the plants were awakening, the trees were shaking the last snow flakes from their branches, and the wild-flowers were striving to thrust their tiny heads through the hard ground.

The old pine-tree was right. The Eve of St. Walpurgis was the herald of Spring. Winter with its darkness and sadness had passed and once again the hillside and valley would be covered with grass and fern and moss and the sweet-smelling flowers.

THE DEVIL'S MILL

THE DEVIL'S MILL

AN unfortunate miller who had lost his fortune and possessed neither mill nor home wandered in a melancholy mood over the mountains. Since misfortune had overtaken him, his so-called friends not only deserted him giving him no help but had even shut their doors in his face. "Had I served the Devil", he said in anger, "for the last ten years, these misfortunes would never have come upon me." The bad words had scarcely escaped his lips when a being stood before him, which he felt sure was the evil spirit because of the red feather in his cap and the cloven hoof which he could not hide.

"Poor man!" said the devil pityingly, "Had you called me before I would willingly have helped you. Men tremble before me, calling me an evil spirit, but the truth is I am always helping the poor and giving

FAIRY TALES FROM THE HARZ MOUNTAINS

them gold and all kinds of good things. I can prove this. You wished you had served me for ten years. Now is it not better to live another ten years in great



The Devil and the Miller

comfort and with abundant riches and then to be mine for ever, instead of remaining poor and despised. See I will build you a fine strong windmill on the Ramsberg where the wind never fails. You will not

THE DEVILS MILL

have long to wait, for the building will all be completed before cock-crow to-morrow, and here you can live in plenty and comfort for the next ten years. If you are contended with this generous bargain then prick your arm and sign the contract with a drop of your blood."

The miller was silent for a time and then he said to himself:—"I cannot any longer endure my misfortunes. They will force me to commit suicide; and if I do not sell my soul to the devil my wife and child will remain in abject poverty. Would that I could earn wealth and still enjoy life!"

Before signing the contract he made one condition with the devil and he asked for twelve sacks of gold from Tidian's cave. When this was brought he signed the document and went to his wife. His heart was sad and heavy, and when his good wife asked where the pile of gold came from, he told her it was a gift from the evil one and then he took her into his confidence and explained how he had signed an agreement with the power of darkness. Then there was weeping and lamentation and his wife pictured in such dreadful colours the condition of a lost soul, that he was nearly driven mad with doubt and despair.

The poor miller considered the matter from all sides; but the contract was duly signed and he saw no way



The Devil's discomforture

THE DEVILS MILL

out of it. The sun sank to rest and darkness came, and about midnight he heard a great noise on the Ramsberg for the devil was busy building the mill, which he had promised to complete before cock-crow. So he quietly ascended the mountain to look at the work. Great blocks of stone had been put together and the mill was built. It only required the millstone to complete the work. Just at that moment the evil one flew through the air carrying the great millstone, and seeing the miller he asked him somewhat scornfully:—"Now, good man, are you satisfied and pleased with the fine mill I have built you?"

"Not particularly so," replied the miller in a sad melancholy voice. So the devil placed the millstone against the wall of the mill in order that he might the better enjoy the miller's unhappiness and misery.

"Whatever can I do?" remarked the miller, "with so large a mill, and besides that the millstone you have just brought is far and away too big." He came near to the stone as if he wished carefully to examine it and turning it over the better to see it. Then, before the devil knew what the miller was up to, he set the stone rolling down the mountain side. It bounded away at a tremendous speed and it actually reached the plain before the devil could overtake it.

FAIRY TALES FROM THE HARZ MOUNTAINS

The devil returned with the millstone as fast as a whirlwind, but before he gained the summit of the Ramsberg a cock crew in a bush near by and the miller shouted for joy as the mill was not completed.

The devil bellowed in a perfect rage of anger and vexation, and throwing the great stone at the mill the building fell in a ruin. At that very moment the miller's wife came out of the thicket with a cock in her arm, which she had brought up the mountain so that it might greet the dawn.

In a cloud of sulphurous vapour the devil departed in vexation and shame that he, the crafty one, had been outwitted by a woman.

TIDIAN'S CAVE

TIDIAN'S CAVE

WONDERFUL things happen in the Harz Mountains on the Eve of St. John's Day. On this day red drops of blood are found on the St. John's Wort and these heal all kinds of diseases; on this day doors are mysteriously unbarred, and bolts and locks fly open; the earth and the rocks disclose their treasures of gold and precious stones to anxious seekers; and on this day of Miracle that most marvellous flower blooms, which has the power of opening the eyes of its happy finder to behold enchanted castles and hidden treasures of diamonds, rubies and gold.

On this ever wonderful day, Tidian, the faithful shepherd of the Count of Falkenstein, was tending his sheep in the flower-strewn valley of the River Selke. Suddenly he saw the most lovely flower possessing a perfume sweeter than ten thousand roses; and when

FAIRY TALES FROM THE HARZ MOUNTAINS

he had gathered it and placed it in his hat he beheld a great cavern in the mountain side which he had never seen before.



Tidian and the Count

He entered the cave and found it was a vast chamber having a floor of golden sand and walls of precious stones. Tidian filled his pockets with the gold and the stones, and taking them to a goldsmith in a neigh-

TIDIAN'S CAVE

bouring town, obtained a vast sum of money for them.

The rumour soon spread that the goldsmith had come into possession of finer and purer gold than had ever been found, and it so happened that the Count of Falkenstein was one day in the goldsmith's shop and the conversation turned on the quality of this splendid gold.

"Yes", remarked the goldsmith, "it is quite true that Tidian's gold is better than any other gold I have ever come across during the many years I have worked in precious metals".

"Why do you call it "*Tidian's gold*?" asked the Count.

"Tidian", replied the goldsmith, "is the name of the man who sold me the gold."

"Tidian!" mused the Count to himself, "is the name of my shepherd."

Thus it was that the Count became covetous of Tidian and his good fortune, and he went straight to him and asked him how it was that he possessed so much gold and so many precious stones.

The faithful shepherd showed his master the secret path which led to the cave, and the Count saw Tidian bring forth from his cavern pocket's full of precious treasure. The sight of the glittering stones and shining

FAIRY TALES FROM THE HARZ MOUNTAINS

gold made the Count consider, that as the shepherd had told him the secret he might perhaps tell it to any one else who asked him. So he called his soldiers, and bid them seize Tidian and throw him into the castle dungeon. Then the Count returned alone to the cave by the secret path to gather the treasure for his own use.

In the dark damp dungeon Tidian sat-sad and sore distressed. He cursed the lovely flower and the treasure-cave as the cause of his present misfortune, and taking the flower out of his cap he trod it under his foot, at the same time wishing that the cavern might be closed, and never opened again until some lame, blind and dumb count ruled in Falkenstein.

Instantly the opening to the cave closed up and the avaricious Count never came out again. Tidian was released from captivity but neither he nor any one else has ever again found the opening to the wonderful treasure-cave.

